

SAMATHA

(Basic Level)

Faculty of Paṭipatti
Department of Samatha

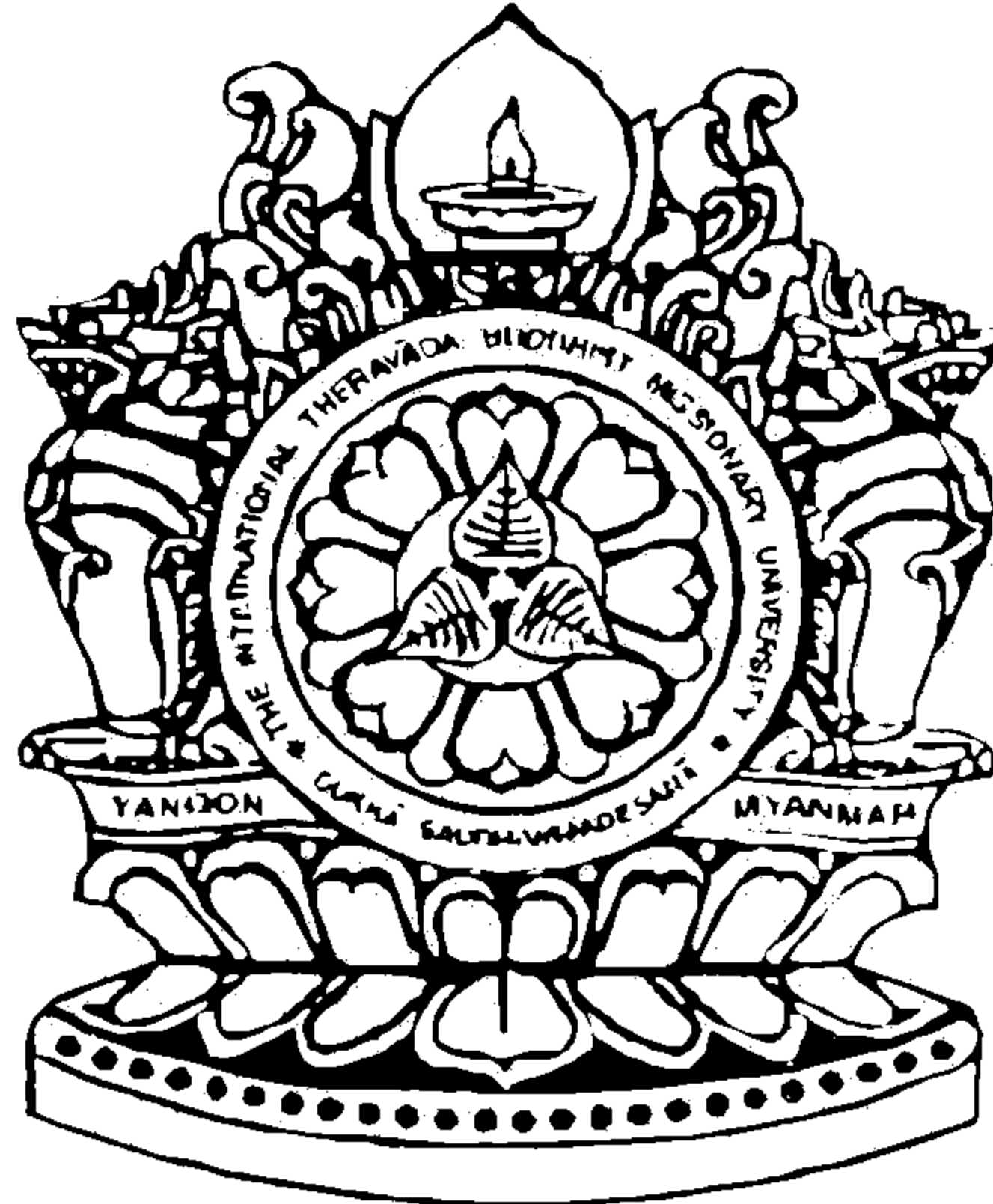


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FACULTY OF PAṬIPATTI

Department of Samatha

Diploma (B.Dh.)

Paṭi 111+ Paṭi 112

SAMATHA

(Basic Level)

by

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INTRODUCTION

All the teachings of the Blessed One converge on one objective – to gain emancipation from all suffering. We shall gain emancipation from suffering when we are fully enlightened to the four Noble Truths.

In order to be fully enlightened to the Noble Truths, we must fully develop the thirty-seven components of enlightenment known as *Bodhipakkhiya*. We can achieve this goal by treading ardently and strenuously on the Eightfold Noble Path.

The Eightfold Noble Path comprises the Three-fold Noble Training – the Training of Morality, The Training of Concentration and the Training of wisdom.

This book deals with the fundamental essentials and practical aspects of the Training of Morality and the Training of Concentration.

The Training of Morality is first described as this moral training serves as the Foundation of Meditation. The Training of Concentration is described next, giving first a complete survey of the forty subjects of tranquility meditation.

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Then the preparation for meditation, the undertaking of *pathavī-kasiṇa* meditation, the practice of mindfulness of breathing (*Ānāpānassati*) and the four guardian meditations (*Caturāraṅga kammaṭṭhānas*) are properly described.

The hindrances to the development of concentration, the powers to overcome these hindrances, the development of the three stages of meditation, the meditation signs and the four *rūpāvacara jhānas* are also clearly described.

This book is divided into two parts. The first part covers the course outline of Paṭi 111 and the second part covers the course outline of Paṭi 112.

It is sincerely hoped that this book will enlighten the readers why they should undertake the Training of Morality and the Training of Concentration and how to undertake these trainings successfully.

March 21, 2004

Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

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1 The Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Ariya Sacca*)

*What now is the Noble Truth of Suffering?
Birth is suffering; decay or ageing
is suffering; sickness is suffering; death
is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain,
grief, and despair are suffering; associa-
tion with the undesirable and unloved
ones is suffering; separation from the
desirable and beloved ones is suffering;
not to get what one desires is suffering;
in short: the Five Groups of Existence are
suffering. (Digha-nikāya, 22)*

All living beings are subject to birth (*jāti*), and consequently to decay (*jarā*), disease (*vyādhi*), and finally to death (*maraṇa*). No one is exempt from these four inevitable types of suffering.

Impeded wish is also suffering. We do not wish to be associated with things or persons we hate, nor do we wish to be separated from things or persons we love. Our cherished desires are not, however, always gratified. What we least expect or what we least desire is often thrust upon us. At times such unexpected, unpleasant circumstances become so intolerable and painful that weak ignorant folk like heart-broken lovers are compelled to commit suicide as if such an act would solve the problem.

Some may argue that enjoying sensual pleasures is not suffering but happiness. Ordinarily the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness to an average person. There is no doubt a momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification, and recollection of such fleeting material pleasures, but they are illusory and temporary. Why?

If we examine sensual pleasures analytically, we shall find that they are made up of the pleasant sensations which arise when sense-doors (eye, ear, nose, tongue and body) are in contact with the corresponding sense-objects and the joy which associate with greed-rooted consciousnesses that enjoy sensual pleasures. All these pleasant things dissolve soon after they have arisen. So we have to exert constant effort in order to enjoy the sensual pleasure again and again, and when we cannot enjoy it any more, we are frustrated and disappointed. Exerting constant effort and disappointment are of course suffering.

It is notable that in *Sutta Pātheyya* (*Pāli 181, Com. 174*) the Buddha described three types of suffering:-

- (i) *Dukkha-dukkha* – the obvious type of suffering comprising bodily pain and mental pain;
- (ii) *Saṅkhāra-dukkha* – the type of suffering associated with constant effort to relieve discomfort, pain, sickness, thirst, hunger, and to gratify sense-desire, etc.;
- (iii) *Viparināma-dukkha* – the type of suffering associated with changes in conditions due to unforeseen circumstances or due to the intrinsic nature of material entities and mental entities (*nāma-rūpa*).

Thus sensual pleasures, family happiness, social enjoyment, etc., are not real happiness for they belong to *saṅkhāra-dukkha* and *viparināma-dukkha*. This is also the reason why the Buddha said: “In short, the Five Groups of Existence are suffering.”

Now the five groups of existence are the corporeality group, the feeling group, the perception group, the group of mental formations and the consciousness group.

In other words they represent all the material entities and the mental entities that constitute the body and mind of all beings.

If we can observe these entities penetratively with the mind-eye, that is, the mind associated with the right concentration, one shall observe that they are arising and dissolving very rapidly and incessantly. So they are impermanent and unsatisfactory, and what is impermanent and unsatisfactory must be regarded as suffering.

So remember that pleasure is but gilded pain and that all social unions end in separation and all sensual pleasures are preludes to suffering. All conditioned things are subject to decay and dissolution, and death is the only certainty.

2 The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (*Dukkha-samudaya Ariya Sacca*)

What now is the Noble Truth of the Origin of suffering?

It is craving (taṇhā) which gives rise to fresh rebirth, and bound up with pleasure and lust, now here, now there, finds ever fresh delight.

This craving is of three kinds:

- (i) Craving for sense pleasures
(kāma-taṇhā),*
- (ii) Craving for existence or becoming
(bhava-taṇhā),*
- (iii) Craving for non-existence or
self-annihilation (vibhava-taṇhā).*

(Digha-nikāya, 22)

Craving for sense pleasures is the desire for the enjoyment of the five sense objects.

Craving for existence is the desire for continued existence or eternal life, referring in particular to life in those higher worlds called fine-material and immaterial existences (*rūpa* and *arūpa-bhava*). It is closely connected with the so-called 'eternity-belief' (*sassata-diṭṭhi*).

Craving for non-existence is the outcome of the 'belief in annihilation' (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*). This is the delusive materialistic notion of a more or less real Ego which is annihilated at death.

'Craving' actually stands for '*lobha*', a mental factor that associates with greed-rooted consciousness. *Lobha* has the characteristics of craving and attachment. It will never give up these characteristics. It will always crave for sensuous objects or *jhāna* happiness. It will never give up this intrinsic nature of craving however much one may get. Even the whole wealth on earth cannot satisfy the desire of *lobha*. It is always on the look-out for something new. So one can never be happy by trying to gratify one's desires. It is like looking for water in the mirage or like looking for gold at the bottom of the rainbow.

Material happiness is merely the gratification of strong desires. No sooner is the desired thing gained than it begins to be scorned. Insatiate (never satisfied) are all desires.

Now it is suffering to work hard to get money and to exert effort to gratify one's desires. And when one's desires are not gratified, one gets disappointed. This is again suffering. When one gets the things one desired for, one is attached to these things and plagued with worry for their safety. So one has to go through many troubles to guard them, and when they are lost, one feels very sad. The greater the attachment to the things or beloved ones, the greater the grief or despair when one loses them. So

craving or attachment is truly the cause of suffering.

Now *lobha* is called *taṇhā* in the sense of desire or attachment, and *rāga* in the sense of craving or taint or defilement. The Buddha said:

“*Nathi rāga samo aggi*”

“There is no fire as hot as *rāga*.”

The *Dhammapada*, verse 216, states:

“*From craving springs grief, from craving
springs fear,*

*For him who is wholly free from craving,
there is no grief, much less fear.*”

Again *lobha* is a defilement (*kilesā*) and it works in unison with other defilements such as ignorance (*moha*), wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), conceit (*māna*), moral shamelessness (*ahirika*), moral fearlessness (*anottappa*) and restlessness (*uddhacca*). So the Buddha also referred to all defilements (*kilesās*) as the causes of suffering.

Again when one perceives a visible object, a sound, odour, taste, bodily impression or a mind-object, one experiences pleasant feeling if the sense-object is desirable, and unpleasant feeling if the sense-object is not desirable. Whatever kind of feeling (*vedanā*) one experiences, if one approves of it, cherishes it and attaches to it, lust or *taṇhā* springs up. When *taṇhā* gains in strength, it becomes strong clinging (*upādāna*). Because of this strong clinging one performs new action to enjoy the cherished feeling again. Thus new kamma (*kamma-bhava*) arises, and when this kamma bears result in the next existence with the support of ignorance, craving and clinging (*avijjā, taṇhā, upadāna*), birth (*jāti*) arises. Dependent on birth, ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair arise. Thus arises the whole mass of suffering.

(*Majjhimanikāya*, 38)

The formula of the *Dependent Origination* (*Paṭiccasamuppada*) of which only some of the twelve links have been mentioned above may be regarded as the detailed explanation of the second Noble Truth. In other words all the causes that are involved in Dependent Origination can be taken as the causes of suffering.

3 The Noble Truth of the Extinction of Suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha Ariya Sacca*)

What now is the Noble Truth of the Extinction of suffering?

It is the complete fading away and extinction of craving, its forsaking and abandonment, liberation and detachment from it. It is Nibbāna - the eternal peace and supreme bliss. (Dighanikāya, 22)

When the cause of suffering, *taṇhā*, is totally uprooted and eradicated, all other defilements are also totally eradicated. So the mind is completely pure, free from all taints, defilements, inflictions and agitations. Consequently total peace and supreme bliss exist in the mental stream. This is the matchless *Nibbānic* bliss which an *Arahant*, perfect noble person, can experience in this very life. The eternal peace and supreme bliss of Nibbana will last for ever after the *Arahant's* attainment of *parinibbāna*.

In *Saṃyuttanikāya* (VII, 43) the dependent extinction of all phenomena is described thus: through the total fading away and extinction of craving (*taṇhā*), clinging (*upādāna*) is extinguished: through the extinction of clinging, the kammic process of becoming (*kamma-bhava*) is extinguished: through the extinction of the kammic process of becoming, rebirth (*jāti*) is ex-

tinguished; and through the extinction of rebirth, ageing and death (*jarā maraṇa*), sorrow, lamentation, suffering, grief and despair are extinguished. Thus comes about the extinction of this whole mass of suffering.

4 The Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Extinction of Suffering (*Dukkha-nirodha-gāminipaṭipadā Ariya Sacca*)

What now is the Noble Truth of the Path that leads to the Extinction of suffering?

It is the Noble Eightfold Path consisting of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

It is also called the *Middle Path*, because it avoids the two extremes of

- (i) giving oneself up to indulgence in *sensual pleasure*, the base, common, vulgar, unholy, unprofitable, and
- (ii) giving oneself up to *self-mortification*, the painful, unholy and unprofitable.

Having avoided these two extremes, the Perfect One has found out the *Middle Path*, which makes one both to see and to know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna*.

If one walks along the *Middle Path* ardently and steadfastly, one shall develop morality, mental concentration and insight knowledges into the psychophysical phenomena stage by stage until finally one attains the *Path-wisdom* (*maggā-ñāṇa*) when one can understand the Four Noble Truths thoroughly with direct knowledge. One then becomes a noble person called *Ariyā*.

The Noble Eightfold Path or the Noble Threefold Training

The Noble Eightfold Path is also called the Noble Threefold Training – the training of morality, the training of concentration, and the training of wisdom. The eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path can be classified as the Noble Threefold Training as follows.

1. Right Understanding <i>Sammā-dit̥thi</i>	}	III. Training of Wisdom <i>Paññā sikkhā</i>
2. Right Thought <i>Sammā-saṅkappa</i>		
3. Right Speech <i>Sammā-vācā</i>	}	I. Training of Morality <i>Sīla sikkhā</i>
4. Right Action <i>Sammā-kammanta</i>		
5. Right Livelihood <i>Sammā-ājīva</i>		
6. Right Effort <i>Sammā-vāyāma</i>	}	II. Training of Concentration <i>Samādhi sikkhā</i>
7. Right Mindfulness <i>Sammā-sati</i>		
8. Right Concentration <i>Sammā-samādhi</i>		

An initial minimum of Right Understanding is required at the very start, because some grasp of the facts of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to the cessation of suffering, is necessary to provide convincing reasons, and an incentive, for a diligent practice of the Path. A measure of right understanding is also required for helping the other path factors to fulfil intelligently and efficiently their individual functions in the common task of liberation. For that reason, and to emphasize the importance of that factor, Right

Understanding has been given the first place in the Noble Eightfold Path.

This initial understanding of the Dhamma, however, has to be gradually developed with the help of the other path factors. In practice the Training of Morality is undertaken first, then the Training of Concentration, and finally the Training of Wisdom, until the Right Understanding reaches the highest clarity of insight (*vipassanā*), which is the immediate condition for entering the four stages of Holiness and for attaining *Nibbāna*.

Right Understanding is therefore the beginning as well as the culmination of the Noble Eightfold Path.

Free from pain and torture is this path, free from groaning and suffering: it is the perfect path. (Majjhima-nikāya, 139)

Truly like this path there is no other path to the purity of insight. If you follow this path, you will put an end to suffering. (Dhammapada 274+275)

But each one has to struggle for himself; the Perfect Ones have only pointed out the way. (Dhammapada, 276)

The only path that leads to the attainment of purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, to the end of pain and grief, to the entering of the right path, and to the realization of Nibbāna is the Noble Eightfold Path.

(Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta)

The Eight Factors of the Noble Path

1 What is the Right Understanding (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*)?

- (1) To understand suffering;
- (2) To understand the origin of suffering;
- (3) To understand the extinction of suffering;
- (4) To understand the path that leads to the extinction of suffering. This is called the Right Understanding. (*Dīgha-nikāya 24*)

However, we should develop 'Right Understanding' in four stages as described below.

- (1) *Kammasakata-sammādiṭṭhi* – understanding kamma and its result;
- (2) *Jhāna-sammādiṭṭhi* – understanding mental absorptions by direct experience;
- (3) *Vipassanā-sammādiṭṭhi* – understanding the psychophysical phenomena by insight;
- (4) *Catusacca-sammādiṭṭhi* – understanding the four noble truths.

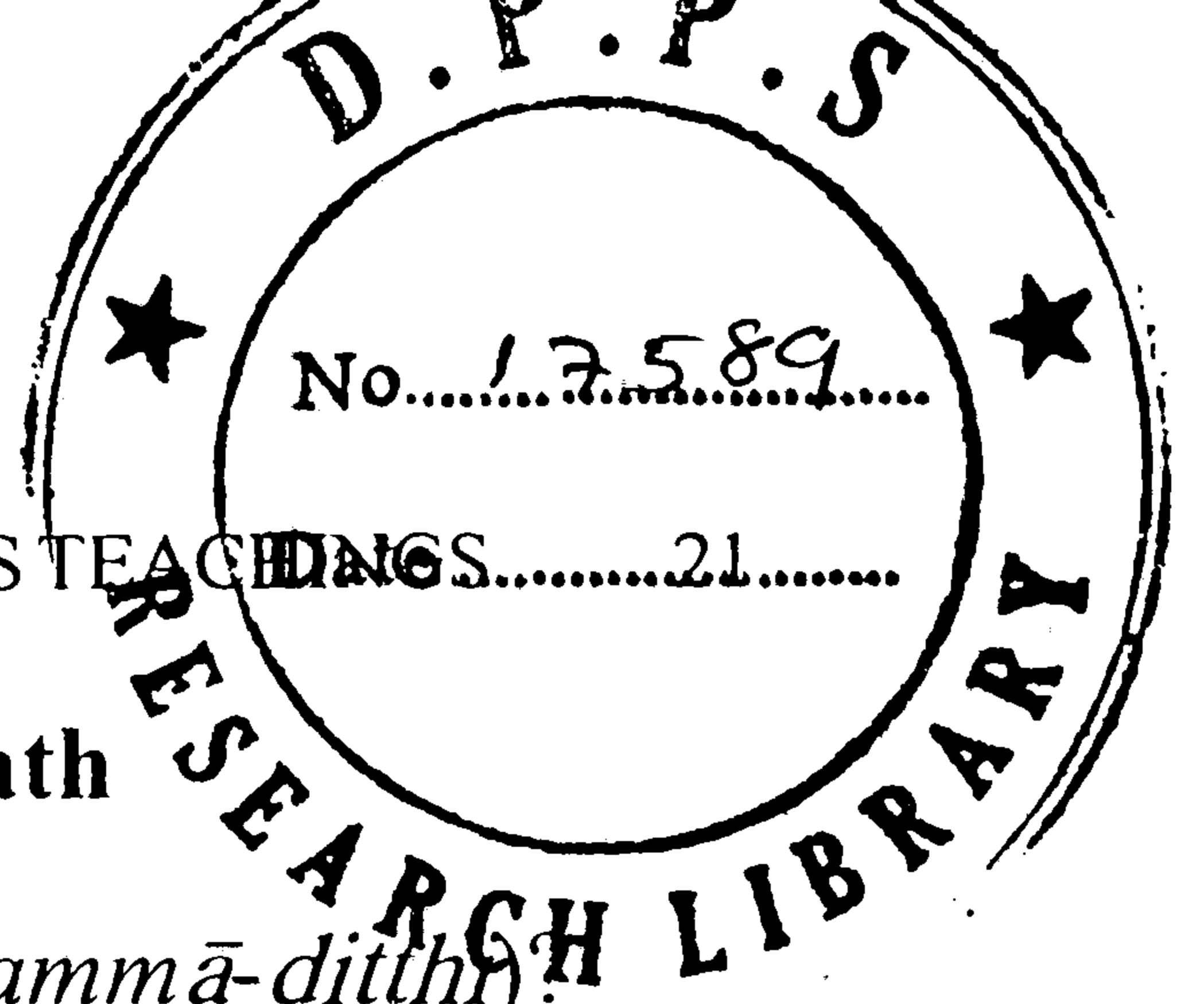
2 What is the Right Thought (*Sammā-saṅkappa*) ?

- (1) The thought free from lust (*nekkhamma-saṅkappa*);
- (2) The thought free from ill-will (*avyāpāda-saṅkappa*);
- (3) The thought free from cruelty (*avihiṃsā-saṅkappa*);

This is called the Right Thought. (*D.22*)

3 What is the Right Speech (*Sammā-vācā*) ?

- (1) To abstain from lying;



- (2) To abstain from slandering or tale-bearing;
 - (3) To abstain from harsh or abusive speech;
 - (4) To abstain from vain talk or useless chatter;
- This is called the Right Speech. (*A.X.176*)

4 What is the Right Action (*Sammā-kammanta*) ?

- (1) To abstain from killing any sentient being;
- (2) To abstain from stealing others' properties;
- (3) To abstain from sexual misconduct or misuse of the senses;

This is called the Right Action. (*A.X.176*)

5 What is the Right Livelihood (*Sammā-ājīva*) ?

- (1) To avoid a wrong way of living which involves wrong speech and wrong action;
- (2) To get one's livelihood by a right way of living which involves right speech and right action;

This is called the Right Livelihood. (*D.22*)

6 What is the Right Effort (*Sammā-vāyāma*) ?

- (1) To prevent the arising of evil, unwholesome things that have not yet arisen;
- (2) To overcome the evil, unwholesome things that have already arisen;
- (3) To develop wholesome things that have not yet arisen;
- (4) To maintain the wholesome things that have already arisen, and to bring them to growth, to maturity and to the full perfection of development;

This is called the Right Effort. (*A.IV.13,14*)

7. What is the Right Mindfulness (*Sammā-sati*) ?

- (1) To dwell in contemplation of the corporeality-group;
- (2) To dwell in contemplation of the feeling-group;
- (3) To dwell in contemplation of the consciousness-group;
- (4) To dwell in contemplation of the mind-objects; ardent, clearly comprehending them and mindful, after putting away worldly greed and grief;

This is called the Right Mindfulness. (D.22)

8 What is the Right Concentration (*Sammā-samādhi*) ?

Concentration is the state of mind that remains fixed on a single object (*cittekeggatā*, lit. 'one pointedness of mind').

The Right Concentration, according to *Mahā-satipatṭhāna Sutta*, is the concentration associated with the four *rūpāvacara jhānas*, that is, mental absorptions in the fine material sphere.

The Right Concentration, according to *Visuddhi-magga*, can be extended from the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) to the concentration associated with any of the four *rūpāvacara jhānas* and the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*, that is, the mental absorptions in the non-material sphere.

References:

- 1 *Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*
- 2 *Digha-nikāya, Mahāvagga, Mahāsatipatṭhāna Sutta*
- 3 “*The Noble Liberation and the Noble Truths*” by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon

Review Questions

- 1 What is the essence of the Buddha’s Teachings?
- 2 Explain the Noble Truth of Suffering.
- 3 What is the cause of suffering? How does it cause suffering to arise?
- 4 What is the Noble Truth of the Extinction of suffering? By what means can we bring about the extinction of suffering?
- 5 Why are living beings wandering round and round in Samsāra ?
- 6 Explain ‘sammādiṭṭhi’ and ‘sammāsaṅkappa’
- 7 Explain the Path-factors that constitute the Training of Morality (sīla-sikkhā).
- 8 Explain the Path-factors that constitute the Training of Concentration (Samādhi-sikkhā).
- 9 How should we undertake the Training of Morality?
- 10 How should the Training of Concentration be undertaken?

CHAPTER II

THE TRAINING OF MORALITY (*Sīla-sikkhā*)

The Foundation of Meditation

Moral training is the first stage of the Noble Eightfold Path. It is also the foundation of meditation on which the superstructure of mental concentration and wisdom must be built. So we must first lay down this moral foundation firmly before we undertake tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*) to develop concentration.

To undertake moral training, we must cultivate the three constituents of the Noble Eightfold Path that constitute moral training (*sīla-sikkhā*):

- (1) Right speech – abstaining from lying, slandering, harsh speech and vain talk;
- (2) Right action – abstaining from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct;
- (3) Right livelihood – abstaining from a livelihood connected with immoral speech and immoral action.

Now the essence of the Noble Eightfold Path can be described by this beautiful verse:

*“To avoid all evil,
To do good,*

*To purify the mind –
This is the advice of all the Buddhas. ”*

What are the evil things that should be avoided?

Basically the evil things can be summarised as ten immoral actions called “*akusala kamma*patha”, meaning “immoral course of action”, or “*ducarita*”, meaning “evil conduct”.

Ten Kinds of Immoral Actions

Immoral actions are divided into three groups on the basis of three modes of performance.

(a) Immoral Bodily Actions

(Akusala kāya-kamma)

1. *Pānātipātā* – killing any living being;
2. *Adinnādānā* – stealing or taking others’ properties unlawfully;
3. *Kamesumicchācārā* – sexual misconduct and misuse of the senses.

(b) Immoral Verbal Actions

(Akusala vacī-kamma)

4. *Musāvāda* – lying;
5. *Pisunavācā* – slandering or tale-bearing;
6. *Pharusavācā* – using harsh or abusive speech;
7. *Samphappalāpā* – gossiping or talking vainly.

(c) Immoral Mental Actions

(Akusala Mano-kamma)

8. *Abhijjhā* – covetousness or planning to get others’ properties unlawfully;

9. *Vyāpāda* – ill-will or planning to destroy others' lives and properties;
 10. *Micchādiṭṭhi* – wrong view which ignores kamma and its effect.

These ten immoral actions are kammically unwholesome or unjust as they cause harm to others as well as to oneself. They give rise to unwholesome kammās which will produce unwholesome results such as woeful existences in woeful abodes.

• Ten Kinds of Moral Actions

Moral actions are called “*kusala kamma*”, meaning “moral course of action”, or “*sucarita*”, meaning “good conduct”. They are also divided into 3 groups on the basis of three modes of performance.

(a) Moral Bodily Actions

(*Kusala Kāya-kamma*)

1. *Pānātipātā-virati* – avoidance of killing;
2. *Adinnādānā-virati* – avoidance of stealing;
3. *Kāmesumicchācārā-virati* – avoidance of sexual misconduct and misuse of the senses.

(b) Moral Verbal Actions

(*Kusala Vacī-kamma*)

4. *Musāvādā-virati* – avoidance of lying;
5. *Pisunāvācā-virati* – avoidance of slandering;
6. *Pharusavācā-virati* – avoidance of harsh speech;
7. *Samphappalāpā-virati* – avoidance of vain talk.

In other words, one should speak only that which is true, that which brings unity, that which is gentle, and that which is beneficial.

(c) Moral Mental Actions

(*Kusala Mano-kamma*)

8. *Anabhijjhā* – avoidance of planning to get others' properties unlawfully;
9. *Avyāpāda* – good-will or avoidance of planning to destroy others' lives and properties;
10. *Sammā-ditthi* – right view which believes in kamma and its result.

These ten moral actions are kammically wholesome or just as they cause no harm to others as well as to oneself. They give rise to wholesome kammās which will produce wholesome results such as blissful existences in blissful abodes.

Five Moral Precepts

(*Pañca-sīla*)

The fundamental training to abide by the advice of all the Buddhas – to avoid all evil, to do good, and to purify the mind – is to observe the five moral precepts. *Pañca-sīla* is the basic code of moral practice for all Buddhists. Everyone should ardently and willingly observe these moral precepts as they lead to a noble way of living and to happiness and prosperity.

The procedure for undertaking *Pañca-sīla* consists of the following five steps.

(1) Asking for Permission to pay Homage

Okāsa Okāsa Okāsa. Oh Venerable Sir, may I pay obeisance to thee! So as to be free from all my offences, accumulated from evil deeds done physically, verbally and mentally, I pay homage to the Three Gems: the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, once, twice, thrice, with my joined-palms on my forehead very respectfully and humbly.

Owing to my deeds of merit, may I always be free from the four nether worlds, the three catastrophes (famine, war, epidemic diseases), the eight states unfavourable for the realization of the Dhamma, the five enemies of mankind (water, fire, bad ruler, thief, wicked person), the four laws of destruction or misfortune, the five forms of ruination (loss of kin, wealth, health, morality and right view); and at the final existence may I attain the Path Wisdom (Magga), its Fruition (Phala) and Nibbāna.

(2) Asking for *Pañca-sīla* together with the Noble Threefold Refuge

One can ask for *Pañca-sīla* from the Buddha, a member of Saṅgha or a virtuous teacher.

Ahaṃ bhante tisaraṇena saha pañca-sīlaṃ dhammaṃ yācāmi anuggahaṃ katvā sīlaṃ detha me bhante.

Dutiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Tatiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Meaning:-

Venerable sir, I wish to observe the five moral precepts together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, Venerable Sir - - - - -

For the third time, Venerable Sir - - - - -

Bhikkhu : *Ya maham vadāmi tam vadetha.*

Repeat the words that I say.

Devotee : *Āmabhante.*

Yes, venerable sir.

Note : It is not necessary to recite 'Āmabhante' if one observes the precepts in front of the Buddha statue.

(3) Paying homage to the Buddha

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa.

(Recite three times)

Homage to the Exalted One, the One worthy of special veneration, and the perfectly self-enlightened One.

(4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge

Buddham saranam gacchāmi

Dhammam saranam gacchāmi

Samgham saranam gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Samgham saranam gacchāmi

Tatīyampi Buddhāṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Tatīyampi Dhammāṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi
Tatīyampi Saṃghāṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi

Meaning :

I take refuge in the Buddha.

I take refuge in the Dhamma.

I take refuge in the Saṃgha.

For the second time I take refuge in the Buddha.

For the second time I take refuge in the Dhamma.

For the second time I take refuge in the Saṃgha.

For the third time I take refuge in the Buddha.

For the third time I take refuge in the Dhamma.

For the third time I take refuge in the Saṃgha.

Bhikkhu : *Tisarāṇagamaṇaṃ paripuṇṇaṃ.*

The act of taking the Noble Threefold
 Refuge is completed.

Devotee : *Āmabhante.*

Yes, Venerable sir.

(5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts

1 *Pānātipātā veramanisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining
 from killing any living being.

2 *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining
 from stealing others' properties.

3 *Kāmesumicchācārā veramanisikkhāpadaṃ
 samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct.

4 *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from telling lies, slandering, speaking harshly, and talking vainly.

5 *Surāmeraya majjappamādatṭhānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs.

Bhikkhu : *Tisaraṇena saha pañcasīlam dhammam sādhuḥkam katvā appamādena sampādeṭha.*

Do observe the five precepts together with the Three Refuges with diligence and steadfast mindfulness.

Lay-devotee : *Āma bhante.*

Yes, Venerable sir.

• The Benefits of Observing Pañca-sīla

- 1 Since the bodily and verbal actions of a person who diligently observes pañca-sīla are blameless and praiseworthy, he possesses the best moral character.
- 2 Since he avoids doing harm to any living being, he brings peace and happiness to all living beings including himself.
- 3 Since he can prevent gross and aggressive defilements such as greed (*lobha*) and anger (*dosa*) from

arising in his mind, he enjoys peace and happiness instantly.

- 4 Lovingkindness (*metta*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) bloom in a person of good morality. So his face is calm, serene and adorable. People love and respect him. So he can join any assembly of people with grace and boldness.
- 5 Pañca-sīla represents the most beautiful and attractive dress as well as the best perfume.
The fragrance of flowers travels not against the wind, nor does the fragrance of sandalwood and perfumes, but the fragrance of the virtuous travels against the wind pervading every direction (Dhammapada 54)
- 6 A virtuous person, because of his mindfulness and diligence, will succeed in business and in amassing riches.
- 7 His good fame will spread far and wide.
- 8 In *Asaṅkheya* sutta the Buddha advises a person to keep pure morality if he wishes to win the adoration of his companions, great wealth, fame and high position.
Ijjhati bhikkhave sīlavato cetopanidhi visuddhattā All the wishes of a person with pure morality will be fulfilled, because his mind is pure.
- 9 A person of pure morality will be free from four types of danger:-

- (1) he is free from the danger of being blamed by himself;
 - (2) he is free from the danger of being blamed or dispraised by others;
 - (3) he is free from the danger of being punished by the law; and
 - (4) he will be free from the danger of being reborn in a woeful abode after death.
- 10 He will be free from delusion and perplexity at the time of death, remembering the meritorious deeds he has done.
- 11 He will be reborn in a blissful abode after death.

Everyone should willingly and diligently observe the moral precepts of *pañca-sīla* as the benefits are very great and the evil consequences are terrible if one breaks the precepts.

If everyone observes *pañca-sīla* diligently, there will be eternal peace in the whole world. Thus *pañca-sīla* is regarded as the ‘**Guardian of the world**’.

There were records of ancient kingdoms where there were severe draught and starvation when the king, his inisters, officers and citizens did not observe *pañca-sīla*.

However, when everyone in the kingdom observed *pañca-sīla* respectfully, the climate became normal with regular rains so that farmers could grow food plants with the result that the kingdom became prosperous.

So *pañca-sīla* is also called ‘*Nicca sīla*’, meaning ‘the precepts to be observed always’, or ‘**Garudhamma sīla**’, meaning ‘the precepts to be observed respectfully and heedfully’.

- **Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla**

‘*Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla*’ means ‘the moral practice having livelihood as its eighth precept’.

This moral practice is also called ‘**Ādibrahma-cariya Sīla**’, meaning ‘the moral practice which serves as the beginning of the noble practice’.

Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla consists of eight precepts which directly seek to abide by the three Noble Path constituents that constitute the Training of Morality – namely, *sammā vācā*, *sammā kammanta*, and *sammā ājīva*.

The procedure for undertaking *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla* is the same as that for undertaking *pañca-sīla*. There is some change only in steps (2) and (5).

(1) Asking for permission to pay homage — as in *pañca-sīla*.

(2) Asking for **Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla** together with the Noble Threefold Refuge:

Ahaṃ bhante tisanena saha ājīvaṭṭhamaka sīlaṃ dhammaṃ yācāmi anuggahaṃ katvā sīlaṃ detha me bhante.

Dutiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Tatīyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Meaning:-

Venerable sir, I wish to observe the eight moral precepts having right livelihood as the eight precept together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, venerable sir - - - - -

For the third time, venerable sir - - - - -

(3) Paying homage to the Buddha

(4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge

(5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts

1 *Pānātipātā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from killing any living being.

2 *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from stealing others' properties.

3 *Kāmesumicchācārā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from sexual misconduct and the misuse of the senses.

4 *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from speaking falsely.

5 *Pisuṇavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from slandering and backbiting.

6 *Pharusavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from using harsh or abusive speech.

7 *Samphappalāpavācā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from gossiping and talking vainly.

8 *Micchājīvā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from wrong livelihood.

Bhikkhu : *Tisaraṇena saha ājīvaṭṭhamaka sīlam
dhammam sādhuḥkaṃ katvā
appamādena sampādetha.*

Do observe the eight moral precepts with right livelihood as the eight precept together with the Noble Three-fold Refuge with vigilance and steadfast mindfulness.

Lay-devotee: *Āmabhante.*

Yes, Venerable sir.

- **The Identity of Pañca-sīla and Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla**

Pañca-sīla and *Ājīvaṭṭhamaka Sīla* have the same significance. In *Pañca-sīla* abstaining from all the four immoral speeches are combined as the fourth moral precept. In the fifth precept, instead of abstaining from wrong livelihood, abstaining from consuming intoxicating drinks and drugs is emphasized.

In reality, when one abstains from three immoral bodily actions and four immoral verbal actions, one's livelihood will be automatically right and pure. Of course one has to avoid also any wrong livelihood which brings harm to oneself or to others such as trading in weapons, poison, intoxicants, narcotic drugs, live animals and human beings.

On the other hand, although abstinence from intoxicants is not specifically prescribed in *Ājīvatṭhamaka-sīla*, this precept is already included in the third precept (*kāmesumicchācārāvirati*) which really means abstinence from improper sensual enjoyments. Abstinence from intoxicants is emphasized in *pañca-sīla*, because, when one becomes intoxicated, one loses one's sense of judgement as well as the sense of moral shame and moral dread, and then one may commit all immoral actions.

The beginners who want to tread along the Noble Eightfold Path should first observe *Ājīvatṭhamaka-sīla*. For those, who are observing *Pañca-sīla*, they need not particularly observe *Ājīvatṭhamaka-sīla*. Nowadays lay-Buddhists usually observe *Pañca-sīla*.

- **Sabbath Precepts**

(*Uposatha-Sīla*)

Pious Buddhists usually observe eight or nine moral precepts instead of *Pañca-sīla* on sabbath days to acquire greater merit. These special moral precepts are called sabbath-precepts (*Uposatha-sīla*). 'Uposatha' means 'living with good conduct'.

In observing Sabbath-precepts, one has to abstain from all sexual activity and from taking food after midday till dawn the next day. One must also abstain from enjoying music, songs, dances, and from using perfumes, cosmetics, high or luxurious seats and beds. The purpose of these abstinences is to control one's lust, pride, craving for and attachment to sensuous objects.

Those who undertake meditation in a meditation centre are required to observe sabbath-precepts to purify their minds from lust and other coarse defilements so that they can advance quickly in their meditation.

The procedure for undertaking to observe sabbath-precepts is the same as that for observing *Pañca-sīla* in steps (1), (3), (4); steps (2) and (5) are described in full below.

- (1) Asking for permission to pay homage to the Triple Gem:

Okāsa okāsa okāsa - - - - -

- (2) Asking for Sabbath-precepts together with the Noble Threefold Refuge

*Ahaṃ bhante tisaraṇena saha
atthaṅgasamannāgataṃ (navāṅgasamannāgataṃ)
uposathasīlaṃ dhammaṃ yācāmi anuggahaṃ
katvā sīlaṃ detha me bhante.*

Dutiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Tatiyampi ahaṃ bhante - - - - - me bhante.

Meaning :

Venerable sir, I wish to observe aṭṭhaṅga-sīla (navaṅga-sīla) consisting of eight (nine) precepts together with the Noble Threefold Refuge.

Venerable sir, please honour me by guiding me to undertake the precepts and the Threefold Refuge.

For the second time, Venerable sir, - - - - -

For the third time, Venerable sir, - - - - -

Bhikkhu : *Ya maham vadāmi tam vadetha.*

Repeat the words that I say.

Devotee : *Āma bhante.*

Yes, Venerable sir.

(3) Paying homage to the Buddha

(4) Taking the Noble Threefold Refuge

(5) Undertaking to observe the Precepts

1 *Pānātipātā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from killing any living being.

2 *Adinnādānā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from stealing others' properties.

3 *Abrahma-cariyā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from the ignoble practice of sexual intercourse.

4 *Musāvādā veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from telling lies, slandering, speaking harshly, and talking vainly.

5 *Surāmerayamajja-pamādaṭṭhānā
veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from consuming intoxicating drinks and drugs.

6 *Vikālabhojanā veramanisikkhāpadam
samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from taking food after midday till dawn the next day.

7 *Nacca gīta vādita visuka dassana mālāgandha
vilepana dhāraṇa maṇḍana vibūsanatthānā
veramanisikkhāpadam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from dancing, singing, playing musical instruments, which are obstacles to the Noble Practice, and also abstaining from wearing flowers, using perfumes and beautifying with any cosmetic.

8 *Uccāsayana mahāsayanā veramanisikkhā-
padam samādiyāmi.*

I undertake to observe well the precept of abstaining from staying on any high or luxurious seat or bed.

9 (For observing *Navanṅa-sīla*) *Yathābalam
mettāsaḥagatena cetasā sabbavantam lokam
phrittivā vihārāmi.*

I shall permeate all living beings with loving-kindness to the best of my ability.

Bhikkhu : *Tisaraṇena saha atthaṅga
(navanṅa) samannāgatam
uposathasīlam dhammam
sādhukam katvā appamādena
sampādetha.*

Lay-devotee : *Āma bhante.*
 Yes, Venerable sir.

● **The Plan to Observe Sabbath-Precepts**

1 If one intends to observe Uposatha-precepts the next day, one should perform the household work in advance as it is not appropriate to do household work while one observes the sabbath-precepts.

2 On the day one is going to observe the Uposatha-precepts, one should get up early, clean oneself, wear clean clothes and keep one's mind pure.

3 One should neither use perfume and cosmetics nor wear flowers nor beautify oneself in advance. One must restrain from any kind of beautifying oneself which contradicts the Uposatha-precepts.

4 One should undertake to observe the Uposatha-precepts as early as possible on that day.

5 After taking the precepts, one should contemplate the virtues of the Buddha, the Dhamma or the Saṅgha or undertake a suitable meditation at a quiet place.

6 One may undertake the sitting-meditation for one hour, the walking meditation for one hour, and repeat the procedure. One can also meditate in the standing or lying position. When one does not want to meditate any more, one may read Dhamma books or recite the teachings of the Buddha.

7 One should also listen to the Dhamma discourse if there is someone to expound the Dhamma, or one may listen to a discourse from a cassette. One may also discuss about the Dhamma with one's Dhamma friends.

8 At nightfall one should feel delighted reflecting how one has spent the day like noble persons (ariyas) observing morality, cultivating concentration and wisdom.

9 When dawn breaks the next day, at the time when one intends to come out of the Sabbath-precepts, one's *Uposatha-sīla* automatically terminates, and only *Pañca-sīla* will remain in one.

10 One may undertake to abide by the *Uposatha* precepts either for a certain period or for the whole life. One should at least keep observing the Sabbath precepts for a day on auspicious days.

- **The Benefits of Observing Uposatha-Sīla**

Since *Uposatha-sīla* contains all *Pañca-sīla* precepts and some more, endeavoring to purify the mind further than that achieved by *Pañca-sīla*, the benefit of observing *Uposatha-sīla* will be much greater than those of observing *Pañca-sīla*.

In observing Uposatha-precepts, just trying to restrain oneself not to break the precepts will not bring the benefits as much as one deserves to receive. Only when one can try to keep one's mind pure, will the benefits be great and extensive.

As a lady should wash herself and her hair before she tries to beautify herself with various cosmetics, perfumes and ornaments to look beautiful and smell sweet, so should a person, who wants to observe *Uposatha-sīla*, should purify his mind to be free from greed, anger, pride, wrong view, jealousy, and other defilements in order to receive the greatest benefits from observing Uposatha-precepts.

- 1 One who observes Uposatha-sīla will achieve great wealth and power.
- 2 Even a future universal monarch can become a universal monarch only if he observes Uposatha-precepts.
- 3 One will achieve progressive benefits of enjoying the great wealth and luxuries of celestial beings and of human beings throughout *samsāra* until one finally attains *Nibbāna*.
- 4 In the present existence one will be innocent, righteous and good, and thus one will receive great admiration and lovingkindness from many persons as well as from celestial beings.
- 5 There are many stories of female deities like *Uttarā*, *Soṇadinnā* and *Uposathā*, who received great celestial luxuries for having observed *Uposatha-sīla* in previous existences as human beings.

During the reign of *King Brahmadaṭṭha* in ancient *Bārānasī*, the *Bodhisatta* was a poor man named ***Gaṅgamāla***. He worked for a wealthy man called *Suciparivāra*. The wealthy man and his wife observed *Uposatha-sīla* six days a month. Every servant in their house-hold also did the same.

On one Uposatha day the Bodhisatta went to work early in the morning without knowing that it was a sabbath-day. When he came back at sunset he found out that others were observing Uposatha-precepts. So he asked for permission from the wealthy man to allow him to observe Uposatha-sīla for the rest of the day. At night he suffered from severe stomach pain due to flatulence since he had not taken any food for the whole day.

Although the wealthy man told him to take food, he refused to take. At dawn the pain became so severe that he fainted. That morning the king happened to go round the town in great magnificence. On seeing the great splendour of the royal luxury, he longed to be a king, and passed away. Immediately he was conceived in the womb of the queen as the result of keeping the Uposatha-precepts for half a day. When he was born, he was named *Udayakumāra*. When he came of age, he became a famous king of *Bārāṇasī*.

In the ancient city of *Sāketa*, there was a female lay-devotee named *Uposathā*. She was endowed with conviction (*saddhā*) and morality (*sīla*). She supported the *saṅgha* with four main requisites. She usually observed the eight Uposatha-precepts on Uposatha days. She frequently listened to the discourses of the Buddha as well as to those of his disciples. She practised meditation and soon became a stream-enterer.

Now she had heard from some discourses that the *Nandavana Garden* in *Tāvātimsā* heaven was very pleasant and enjoyable. So she wished to be in that garden.

When she passed away, she was reborn in *Tāvatisā* as a celestial maiden, named *Uposathā*, in the *Nandavana Garden*.

The Buddha said, “A person of good morality, because he has a pure mind, will get his desire fulfilled whatever he sets his mind on”. This is so because a moral person has a pure volition which, together with his strong will, will fulfil his desire whatever he wishes for.

- **Caritta sīla and Vāritta sīla**

Caritta sīla means abiding by the rules of conduct and performing one’s duties and responsibilities.

In *Singālovāda Sutta* the Buddha describes the rules of conduct or duties for sons and daughters, for parents, for pupils, for teachers, for husbands, for wives, for friends, etc. One must perform the duties which are concerned with oneself to be endowed with *Caritta sīla*.

Furthermore, as part of *Caritta sīla*, one should respect one’s parents, teachers, elders and monks. One should bend one’s body forward when one passes in front of them. One should give them the right of way when one comes face to face with them. One should not eat first before they start to eat. One should not sit or stay disrespectfully in front of them. When one takes something from them or gives them something, one should take or give with both hands. One should always speak to them and listen to them politely and respectfully. One must always be grateful to those who have helped one in any way.

If we cannot perform our duties or responsibilities because of unfavourable circumstances, it does not amount to performing any wrong or unwholesome action. It will not be the cause for being reborn in woeful abodes in the future. However, the wise may dispraise or blame us for such negligence of our duties and responsibilities. If we can perform our duties and responsibilities regularly, our morality will be pure and more fully developed.

Caritta sīla should be fulfilled with faith and confidence (*saddhā*) based on understanding, and strenuous effort (*virīya*) that can drive away sloth and torpor. Knowing that this conduct is good, and that it will bring good results in the present as well as in the future, one should perform one's duties and responsibilities willingly and patiently without hesitation and laziness but with faith, confidence and strenuous effort in order to fulfil one's *Caritta sīla* and to bring about one's prosperity.

Vāritta sīla is abstinence from evil conduct such as committing immoral actions (*duccarittas*) as the Buddha has taught that we should abstain from them. *Pañca-sīla*, *Ājīvatṭhamaka sīla*, *Uposatha-sīla*, etc., belong to *vāritta sīla*.

If we commit immoral actions, the unwholesome kamma which is derived from such evil actions will condition us to be reborn in woeful abodes. If we abstain from immoral actions, the wholesome kamma which is derived from such good actions will condition us to be reborn in celestial abodes.

If we can observe the *vāritta sīla* such as *Pañca sīla*, we are developing wholesome *kusala-kamma* which will be the cause for attaining celestial bliss and *Nibbāna* bliss. If we do not observe *vāritta sīla* and commit immoral actions so that unwholesome *akusala kamma* is established, this *akusala kamma* can surely send us to the Nether worlds.

A person who fulfils *cāritta sīla* by performing his duties and responsibilities regularly can easily abide by *vāritta sīla*, that is, can easily abstain from committing immoral actions. A person who cannot fulfil *cāritta sīla* will find it hard to abide by *vāritta sīla*. So we should fulfil both *cāritta sīla* and *vāritta sīla*.

- **Catupārisuddhi Sīla**

(Fourfold Morality for Overall Purity)

A bhikkhu must observe four kinds of morality (*sīla*) to be morally pure in all respects.

1 ***Pātimokkhasamvara Sīla***

This is the moral discipline consisting of 227 rules for bhikkhus which the Buddha prescribes for bhikkhus to observe.

“Here a bhikkhu dwells restrained with the *Pātimokkha* restraint, possessed of the proper conduct and resort, and seeing fear in the slightest fault, he trains himself by undertaking the precepts of training”.

(*Vbh. 244*)

‘*Pātimokkha*’ is the virtue of the training precepts, for it frees him who protects it, guards it, from the pains of the states of loss, etc.. ‘*samvara*’ means restraint, which is a term for bodily and verbal non-transgression.

2 *Indriyasamvara Sīla*

It is the restraint of the six sense faculties, namely, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind, to prevent the arising of defilements at these faculties.

“On seeing a visible object with the eye, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the eye faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the eye faculty, undertakes the restraint of the eye faculty.

“On hearing a sound with the ear - - On smelling an odour with the nose - - On tasting a flavour with the tongue - - On touching a tangible object with the body - - On knowing a mental object with the mind, he apprehends neither the signs nor the particulars through which, if he left the mind faculty unguarded, evil and unprofitable states of covetousness and grief might invade him, he enters upon the way of its restraint, he guards the mind faculty, undertakes the restraint of the mind faculty.” (M.i,180)

3 *Ājīvaparisuddhi Sīla*

This is the morality which concerns with the purity of livelihood. As one has undertaken to lead a noble life as

a bhikkhu, one must avoid improper search and evil conduct in earning one's livelihood.

A bhikkhu must abstain from such livelihood which involves transgression of the six training precepts. The six training precepts prescribed by the Buddha are as follows.

(1) With livelihood as cause and reason, one of evil wishes, a prey to evil wishes, lays claim to jhāna, magga or phala, which are the property of noble persons. In other words, he claims to attain jhāna or magga and phala even though he does not attain them.

(2) With livelihood as cause and reason, he acts as go-between or matchmaker.

(3) With livelihood as cause and reason, he says, "A bhikkhu who lives in your monastery is an *Arahant*", implying that he himself is an *Arahant*.

(4) With livelihood as cause and reason, a bhikkhu who is not sick eats superior food that he has ordered for his own use.

(5) With livelihood as cause and reason, a bhikkhunī who is not sick eats superior food that she has ordered for her own use.

(6) With livelihood as cause and reason, one who is not sick eats curry or cooked rice that he has ordered for his own use.

4 *Paccayasannissita Sīla*

This is the morality concerning with the use of the necessities of life. One must contemplate the purpose of using the necessities of life such as robe, food, dwelling place and medicine in order to prevent the arising of defilements in using them.

(1) “Reflecting wisely, he uses the robe only for protection from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of concealing the private parts.

(2) “Reflecting wisely, he uses alms food neither for amusement nor for intoxication nor for smartening nor for embellishment, but only for the endurance and continuance of this body, for the ending of discomfort, and for assisting the life of purity.

(3) “Reflecting wisely, he uses the resting place only for the purpose of protection from cold, from heat, from contact with gadflies, flies, wind, burning and creeping things, and only for the purpose of warding off the perils of climate and enjoying retreat.

(4) “Reflecting wisely, he uses the requisite of medicine as cure for the sick only for protection from arisen hurtful feelings and for complete immunity from affliction.” (M.i, 10)

Lay-devotees should also observe the above *sīlas* for these *sīlas* develop not only moral culture but also mental culture – both of which pave the way to the arising of

mental concentration. Of course, eight or nine moral precepts serve as *pātimokkhasamvara sīla* for lay-persons.

• ***Mahā-Mitta Thera***

Venerable Mahāmitta's mother was sick with a poisoned tumour. She told her daughter, who was a bhikkhuni, to go to her brother and get some medicine. She went and told him about their mother's sickness.

Venerable Mahāmitta said, "I do not know how to gather root medicines and such things and concoct a medicine from them. But rather I will tell you a medicine: since I went forth to the homeless life and become a bhikkhu, I have not broken my virtue of restraint of the sense faculties by looking at the bodily form of the opposite sex with a lustful mind. By this declaration of truth, may my mother get well. Go and tell the lay devotee and rub her body."

The bhikkhunī went and told her mother what have happened and then did as she had been instructed. At that very moment the mother's tumour vanished, shrinking away like a lump of froth. She got up and uttered a cry of joy: "If the Fully Enlightened One were still alive, why should he not stroke with his hand the head of a bhikkhu like my son." So

*Let another noble clansman
Gone forth in the Dispensation
Keep, as did the Elder Mitta,
Perfect faculty restraint.*

- *Cittagutta Mahāthera*

In the Great Cave of *Kuraṇḍaka*, there was a lovely painting of the Renunciation of the Seven Bhuddhas. A number of bhikkhus wandering about among the dwellings saw the painting and said, “What a lovely painting, venerable sir.”

The Elder said, “For more than sixty years, friends, I have lived in this cave, and I did not know whether there was any painting there or not. Now, today, I know it through those who have good eyes.”

The Elder, it seems, had never raised his eyes and looked up in the cave. And at the door of his cave there was a great ironwood tree. And the Elder had never looked up at that either. He knew it was in flower when he saw its petals on the ground each year.

The king heard of the Elder’s great virtues, and he sent for him three times, desiring to pay homage to him. When the Elder did not go, the king had the breasts of all women with infants in the town bound and sealed off, saying: “As long as the Elder does not come, let the children go without milk.”

Out of compassion for the children the Elder went to *Mahāgāma*. When the king heard that he had come, he had him brought up into the inner palace, paid homage to him and provided him with a meal.

Then, saying ‘Today, venerable sir, there is no opportunity for me to take the precepts. I shall take them

tomorrow', he took the Elder's bowl. After following for a little, he paid homage with the queen and turned back. As seven days went by thus, whether it was the king who paid homage or whether it was the queen, the Elder said, "May the king be happy."

Bhikkhus asked, "Why is it, venerable sir, that whether it is the king or the queen who pays homage to you, you always say 'May the king be happy'?"

The Elder replied, "Friends, I do not notice whether it is the king or the queen."

At the end of seven days, when the king found that the Elder was not happy living there, he let the Elder go back to his place.

When he was back at the Great Cave of *Kuraṇḍaka*, the Elder undertook the walking meditation. When night fell, a deity who dwelt on the ironwood tree stood by with a torch of sticks. Then his meditation subject became quite clear and plain. The Elder was glad, and immediately after the middle watch he reached *Arahanship*, making the whole rock resound.

So when another clansman seeks his own good,
Let him not be hungry-eyed,
Like a monkey in the groves,
Like a wild deer in the woods,
Like a nervous little child.

*Let him go with eyes downcast
Seeing a plough yoke's length before,
That he falls not in the power
Of the forest-monkey mind.*

• ***Sāriputta Mahāthera***

Once *Venerable Sāriputta* and *Venerable Mahā Moggalāna* were residing in a certain forest. One day an affliction of colic arose in *Sāriputta Mahāthera*, causing him great pain.

In the evening *Venerable Mahā Moggallāna* came to attend upon him. Seeing him lying down, he asked what the reason was. Knowing the reason, he again asked, “What used to make you better formerly, friend?”

Venerable Sāriputta said, “When I was a layman, friend, my mother used to mix ghee, honey, sugar and so on, and give me rice gruel with pure milk. That used to make me better.”

Then the other said, “So be it, friend. If either you or I have merit, perhaps tomorrow we shall get some.”

Now a deity who dwelt on a tree at the end of the walk overheard their conversation. He went to the family who was supporting the *Elder Sāriputta* and entered the body of the eldest son, causing him discomfort. Then he told the assembled relatives the price of the cure: “If you prepare rice gruel with ghee, honey, sugar and pure milk tomorrow for the *Elder*, I will set this one free.” The parents of the boy said, “Even without being told by you,

we regularly supply the Elder's needs", and on the following day they prepared rice gruel of the kind needed.

Venerable Mahā Moggallāna went into the village. Those people met him. They took his bowl, filled it with the special milk rice gruel, and gave it back to him. The Elder made as though to go, but they said, "Eat, venerable sir, we shall give you more."

When the Elder had eaten, they washed the bowl and gave him another bowlful. The Elder left. Bringing the alms-food to Venerable Sāriputta, he said, "Here, friend, eat."

When Venerable Sāriputta saw the special milk rice gruel, he thought: "The gruel is very nice. How was it got?", and seeing how it had been obtained, he said, "Friend, the alms-food cannot be used."

Instead of thinking "He does not eat the alms-food brought by the likes of me", the other at once took the bowl by the rim and turned it over on one side. As the rice gruel fell on the ground, the Elder Sāriputta's affliction vanished. From then on it did not appear again during forty-five years.

Then he said to Venerable Mahā Moggallāna, "Friend, even if one's bowels come out and trail on the ground, it is not fitting to eat the gruel got by verbal intimation", and he uttered this exclamation:

*“My livelihood might well be blamed,
If I were to consent to eat
The honey and the gruel obtained
By influence of verbal hints.*

*And even if my bowels obtrude
And trail outside, and even though
My life is to be jeopardized,
I will not blot my livelihood.*

*For I will satisfy my heart
By shunning all wrong kinds of search;
And never will I undertake
The search the Buddha has condemned”.*

References:

- 1 *“The Teachings of the Buddha (Basic Level)”, published by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, pp. 120-169;*
- 2 *“Visuddhi Magga” by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol. I, pp. 1-82.*
- 3 *“The Path of Purification” (Visuddhi Magga by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa), translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, pp. 1-58.*

Review Questions

- 1 What is Moral Training (sīla-sikkhā)? How can one undertake it?
- 2 Describe the full procedure for undertaking to observe Pañca-sīla together with the Noble Three-

fold Refuge.

- 3 What are the ten immoral actions? How can one avoid committing them?
- 4 What is the advice of all the Buddhas? How can we abide by this advice?
- 5 Describe the five precepts of Pañca-sīla. What is the significance of observing these precepts?
- 6 Describe the eight precepts of Ājivaṭṭhamaka sīla. What benefits can one enjoy for observing these precepts?
- 7 Describe the full procedure for undertaking to observe Atthaṅga-sīla.
- 8 Why should we observe Uposatha-sīla on special days of religious significance? What are the benefits of observing Uposatha-sīla?
- 9 Describe the nine precepts of Navaṅga-sīla.
- 10 What is the difference between Cāritta-sīla and Vāritta-sīla? Which sīla is more important?
- 11 What is the fourfold morality for overall purity (Catupārisuddhi-sīla)? How should we observe them?
- 12 What are the four kinds of morality that constitute Catupārisuddhi-sīla? Describe them briefly.

CHAPTER III

THE TRAINING OF CONCENTRATION (*Samādhi Sikkhā*)

- **Tranquility Meditation**
(*Samatha Bhāvanā*)

The training of concentration is the second and middle stage of the Noble Eightfold Path. It consists of developing the three constituents of the Noble Eightfold Path that constitute the training of concentration (*samādhi sikkhā*):

- (1) *Sammāvāyāma* – the right effort,
- (2) *Sammāsati* – the right mindfulness,
- (3) *Sammāsamādhi* – the right concentration.

If one can exert strenuous effort to be vigilantly mindful of a meditation object, one can build up mental concentration.

The right concentration, according to *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*, is the concentration associated with the four *rūpāvacara jhānas*, which are the meditative absorptions in the fine-material sphere. *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification), however, extends the right concentration from the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) to the concentration associated with any of the four *rūpāvacara jhānas* and the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*, which are the meditative absorptions in the immaterial sphere.

To attain the right concentration one has to undertake tranquility meditation systematically.

- **What is Meditation?**

Meditation is a simple, practical way of training and purifying the mind to calm down, culture and develop the mind. It is, therefore, mental culture or mental development that produces so much good effect that it should be practised repeatedly.

Meditation initially involves focussing the mind on a suitable object of meditation, and applying mindfulness to be aware of the object constantly. By being mindful of the meditation object, one controls the mind from wandering from one sense-object to another, thus preventing desires, craving, aversion, worry, remorse, distraction and vain thoughts from arising.

Thus meditation helps wholesome consciousness to arise continuously, develops wholesome positive qualities, and strengthens mental power and mind control. Since wholesome consciousness gives rise to wholesome kamma, which will bear good results in due course, meditation is the most beneficial way of living.

Besides meditation relaxes and rehabilitates the mind, building up joy, tranquillity, peace and happiness immediately. It reduces tension, stress and strain, high blood pressure, and the tendency to smoke, drink or use drugs. It relieves fatigue and cures many physical ailments. It remarkably brings about physical and mental well-being. Thus meditation is also an art of living happily and healthily.

- **Two Types of Meditation**

The Buddhist Canons describe two types of meditation (*bhāvanā*):

(1) *Samatha bhāvanā* – Tranguillity-meditation,

(2) *Vipassanā bhāvanā* – Insight-meditation.

The mental training and mental culture dealing with ‘calm or tranguillity’ is called ‘*samatha bhāvanā*’, and that dealing with ‘insight’ is called ‘*Vipassanā bhāvanā*’.

(1) ***Samatha bhāvanā***

‘*Samatha*’ means ‘tranquility, calm or quietude’ which is the concentrated, unshaken, undefiled and peaceful state of mind. It is called ‘calm’ because it calms down the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) including passions.

Thus *samatha bhāvanā* is the mental training which calms down the five hindrances and develops tranquillity and mental concentration.

In order to do so, the mind is focussed on a meditation-object, which is one’s own breath, and strenuous effort is exerted to be aware of the object constantly. Whenever the mind wanders out to other sense objects, it is brought back to the meditation object. By trying to be mindful of the meditation object continuously, one strengthens the *jhāna* factors which associate with wholesome consciousness (*kusala citta*).

When the *jhāna* factors become strong, they can suppress and temporarily eliminate the hindrances which agitate and inflict the mind. When the hindrances are

totally suppressed from arising for one hour, two hours or more, the neighbourhood concentration or access concentration (*upacara bhāvanā*) is attained.

By meditating further one can raise the concentration to meditative absorption (*jhāna*). There are four stages of meditative absorption in the fine material sphere (four *rūpāvacara jhānas*) and four stages of meditative absorption in the immaterial sphere (four *arūpāvacara jhānas*).

Samatha or tranquility or concentration (*samādhi*) stands for 'ekaggatā cetasika', a mental factor which associates with every consciousness. *Ekaggatā* literally means 'one-pointedness': it focusses the mind on an object; it binds the mental concomitants with consciousness together to be at a state of one-pointedness on the object of meditation.

Thus samatha bhāvanā or tranquillity meditation is the mental training which calms down and suppresses the mental hindrances by strengthening the jhāna factors including *ekaggatā* so as to attain the neighbourhood concentration and the higher jhāna concentration.

(2) *Vipassanā bhāvanā*

Vipassanā means 'insight' or 'to see things as they really are in many special ways'. It is the intuitive insight into the true nature of all physical and mental phenomena of existence.

‘*Vipassanā*’ stands for ‘*paññā-cetasika*’, a mental factor which associates with wholesome consciousness. ‘*Paññā*’ literally means ‘knowledge or wisdom’.

Vipassanā bhāvanā or insight meditation develops the *paññā cetasika* by constantly investigating and contemplating on the three characteristic marks of all psycho-physical phenomena, namely, impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and impersonality or non-self (*anatta*).

Vipassanā bhāvanā develops insight wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) one after another until the Path-wisdom (*magga-ñāṇa*) and its Fruition-wisdom (*phala-ñāṇa*) are realized. Then the meditator becomes a noble person (*ariyā*) and can enjoy the unique bliss of Nibbāna as much as he or she wishes.

• **The Role of Meditation in the Noble Path**

The Eightfold Noble Path is made up of eight constituents which can be classified as Threefold Noble Training – viz., the Training of Morality, the Training of Concentration, and the Training of Wisdom. The purpose of the Threefold Training is to eradicate all the defilements which are the root causes of all suffering. The objective of the Threefold Training is to realize Nibbāna and enjoy eternal peace and happiness.

The Ten Defilements (*kilesās*) are:

1. *Moha* – ignorance of the realities.
delusion
2. *Lobha=taṇhā* – desire, craving, attachment

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 3. <i>Dosa</i> | – | anger, hatred, aversion |
| 4. <i>Māna</i> | – | pride or conceit |
| 5. <i>Ditṭhi</i> | – | wrong view |
| 6. <i>vicikicchā</i> | – | sceptical doubt |
| 7. <i>Uddacca</i> | – | restlessness |
| 8. <i>Thina</i> | – | sloth or laziness |
| 9. <i>Ahirika</i> | – | lack or moral shame |
| 10. <i>Anotappa</i> | – | lack or moral dread |

These defilements have been thriving and flourishing in the minds of worldlings from time immemorial, and they have grown like a big tree. Now, if we want to destroy a big tree, we must cut off the branches first, then the trunk, and dig out the roots and burn them all.

In the same way to eradicate all defilements, we must first undertake the training of morality to cleanse our minds from coarse, inflated and aggressive defilements called *vītikkama kilesas*. These are the branches of the big kilesa-tree. If we stop the training, these coarse, aggressive defilements will grow up anew just as the tree grows up new branches.

Now after cutting off the branches, we must cut the trunk of the tree. This is similar to undertaking the training of concentration after establishing good morality. To accomplish the training of concentration, we undertake tranquillity meditation. This will calm down, subdue, and suppress the defilements which have arisen, and are agitating and inflicting the mind. These awakened and active defilements are called *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās*.

Among these, the five most active ones – *lobha*, *dosa*, *thina*, *uddhacca* and *vicikicchā* – are known as the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*). When we attain the neighbourhood concentration or the higher *jhāna* concentration, all these agitating defilements including the hindrances are well subdued and suppressed.

Now, after cutting the trunk of the tree, the roots still remain under ground, and they will grow into a new tree again. In the same way, when the active defilements are subdued, latent or dormant defilements known as *anusaya kilesas* still remain. They are like the roots of defilements, capable of growing into *pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās* and *vitikkama kilesās* very quickly. So the *anusayas* must be uprooted and destroyed completely in order to eradicate the defilements, the cause of suffering, once and for ever. It is like digging out the roots and burning them so as to destroy the tree once and forever.

To eradicate the latent defilements is not an easy task. It is indeed the most profound and difficult task in the world. To accomplish this task we must undertake insight meditation very ardently, strenuously and correctly. *Vipassanā bhāvanā* accomplishes the training of wisdom. Only the highest wisdom, that is the four stages of Path-wisdom, can eliminate and destroy the *anusayas* completely.

Now when we attain the right concentration, the mind becomes very powerful. It radiates very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this meditation light, we can penetrate into our body and mind with our mind-

eye to observe the ultimate realities – *cittas*, *cetasikas* and *rūpas*, which are the fundamental units of all psychophysical phenomena. These *nāmas* and *rūpas* are arising and dissolving very rapidly and incessantly in accordance with the law of Dependent Origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*) and the *Paṭṭhāna* Causal Relations.

In *Vipassanā bhāvanā* we must perform the right investigation (*sammā-saṅkappa*) into these *nāmas* and *rūpas* and their causal relations in order to develop the right understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*) of all psychophysical phenomena. After developing ten insight knowledges (*vipassanā-ñāṇas*), we shall attain the Path-wisdom (*Maggañāṇa*) and its Fruition-wisdom (*Phalañāṇa*): The Path-wisdom in four stages can eradicate ignorance or *avijjā* (*moha*) completely. And when *avijjā* is eradicated, all the remaining defilements are also totally eliminated. We shall be enlightened to the four Noble Truths and become noble persons (*Ariyas*) who can enjoy the supreme bliss of Nibbāna as much as they wish.

- **The Purpose and Objective of Tranquility Meditation**

The purpose of tranquility meditation (*samatha bhāvanā*) is to accomplish the training of concentration (*samādhi-sikkhā*). In order to accomplish the training of concentration, we must train and culture our mind to make it free from all defilements.

To achieve this purpose we try to focus our mind on a meditation subject prescribed by the Buddha for

the purpose of tranquility meditation. We must establish ourselves in morality before we undertake tranquility meditation. The training of morality subdues and prevents the inflated, aggressive defilements (*vīṭikkama kilesas*) from arising in the mind.

But the moderate defilements that have arisen in the mind keep agitating the mind to make it restless and distracted. By focussing the mind on the meditation subject, we directly control the mind and prevent it from becoming restless and distracted. By doing so we develop wholesome minds (*mahākusala cittas*) and the jhāna-factors which associate with the wholesome minds.

As the jhāna factors become more and more developed, they calm down and subdue the hindrances as well as other defilements. When all the defilements are well subdued and suppressed, the access *jhāna* and the access or neighbourhood concentration are attained. By meditating further, one can attain *jhāna* and *jhāna* concentration when the mind can be kept free from defilements for longer periods.

The objective or goal of tranquility meditation is to attain the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*) which is equivalent to the concentration associated with the four *rūpāvacara jhānas*. The right concentration is used as the basis for insight meditation.

- **Mental Concentration and the Need to develop it**

Mental concentration is the concentrated, unshaken, undefiled and peaceful state of mind, It is also

the state of one-pointedness of mind or profitable unification of mind.

It is synonymous with '*samādhi*' which stands for '*ekaggatā cetasika*'. '*Ekaggatā*' is rendered here as 'unification of mind' in the sense of agreement and harmony of consciousness and its concomitants in focussing on a single object. It is sometimes rendered 'one-pointedness' in that sense, or in the sense of the focussing of a searchlight.

In *Samādhi Sutta* and many others, the Buddha exhorted the bhikkhus to develop concentration to be able to see things as they really are.

*“Samādhim bhikkave bhāvetha samāhito
bhikkhave bhikkhu yathabhūtaṃ pajānāti.”*

“Oh monks, try to develop mental concentration. The monk, who has developed concentration, will be able to see things as they really are.”

The normal human eye has very limited vision. It cannot see in the dark whereas many animals such as dogs, cats and rats can move about in the dark.

Again the normal human mind is shielded and blinded by the hindrances as well as other defilements. When these defilements are driven away, though temporarily, by undertaking tranquility meditation and attaining the access concentration or the jhāna concentration, the mind becomes pure and very powerful. It radiates very

bright and penetrative light which can pass through bodies and walls.

This bright and penetrative light is the most powerful weapon for undertaking insight meditation. With the help of this light one can observe objects nearby as well as those which are far away with one's mind-eye while keeping the eyes closed. Also one can scan layer after layer of one's body in detail just like scanning with ultrasound. One can also analyze one's mind and body in detail to observe the ultimate realities – cittas, cetasikas and rūpas, which evade the detection even by the latest science equipment.

So, with the help of this meditation light, one can readily undertake insight meditation, systematically investigating the true natures of the ultimate realities to develop insight knowledge one after another and finally to realize Nibbāna with the Path-wisdom and the Fruition-wisdom.

- **The Subject of Meditation**
(*Kammaṭṭhāna*)

To undertake tranquillity-meditation or insight-meditation we need a suitable object to focus our attention on as consciousness cannot arise without a sense-object striking a sense-organ.

A meditation subject serves as the 'place or base' as well as the 'subject of meditation' for carrying out the act of meditation. It also serves as the 'working ground' or 'training ground' for training the mind in order to develop and culture it. In developing and culturing the mind.

the meditation subject must not provoke lust or aversion.

The subject of tranquillity-meditation should be one of the forty subjects prescribed by the Buddha himself.

The subject of insight-meditation is the three characteristic marks of existence – viz., impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*) and not-self (*anatta*).

- **Forty Subjects of Tranquillity Meditation**
(*Samatha Kammaṭṭhāna*)

(a) Seven Classes of Meditation Subjects

- 1 *Kasiṇa* – 10 kasiṇa subjects or devices
- 2 *Asubha* – 10 loathsome subjects
- 3 *Anussati* – 10 recollection subjects
- 4 *Brahm-vihāra* – 4 subjects of divine abidings
- 5 *Āruppa* – 4 subjects of immaterial states
- 6 *Āhārepaṭikūla-saññā* – 1 subject of perception of repulsiveness in nutriment
- 7 *Catudhātuvaṭṭhāna* – 1 subject of defining the 4 elements

(b) Ten Kasiṇas

‘*Kasiṇa*’ means ‘whole’ or ‘complete’. It is so called because it should be observed wholly or completely in meditation, and also because the light issuing from the conceptualized sign or image is extended to all directions without limitation.

Because it should be observed wholly, the shape of a *kaṣiṇa* should be circular with its diameter equal to one span and four fingers, i.e. about one foot, if it is observed from a distance of two and a half cubits or 3 feet 9 inches.

1	<i>Pathavī-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	earth kaṣiṇa
2	<i>Āpo-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	water kaṣiṇa
3	<i>Tejo-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	fire kaṣiṇa
4	<i>Vāyo-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	air kaṣiṇa
5	<i>Nīla-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	blue kaṣiṇa
6	<i>Pīta-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	yellow kaṣiṇa
7	<i>Lohita-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	red kaṣiṇa
8	<i>Odāta-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	white kaṣiṇa
9	<i>Āloka-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	light kaṣiṇa
10	<i>Ākāsa-kaṣiṇa</i>	—	space kaṣiṇa

By meditation on a *kaṣiṇa* one can develop the five *rūpāvacara jhānas* and then proceed to develop the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*. After attaining all these jhānas in all the kaṣiṇas, one can practise further to develop five mundane supernormal powers (*lokiya-abhiññās*).

(c) Ten Asubhas

They refer to the ten signs of foulness or the ten kinds of corpses which may be found in some cmenteries or charnel grounds or battle fields where dead bodies are not buried or cremated and where flesh-eating animals such as dogs, jackals, wolves and vultures frequent.

In modern days any kind of corpse which shows the repulsive nature of the body is a suitable subject for meditation.

Worldlings are, as a rule, very strongly attached to their bodies as well as to others' bodies by lust (*rāga*). The best way to suppress this lust and the best remedy to cure the *rāga*-disease is *asubha bhāvanā*. So it was made a compulsory meditation subject at the time of the Buddha.

The ten signs of foulness or the ten kinds of corpses are as follows.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 <i>Uddhumātaka</i> | – the rotten, bloated corpse |
| 2 <i>Vinīlaka</i> | – the blue, black corpse
with patchy discolouration |
| 3 <i>Vipubbaka</i> | – the festering corpse with
pus oozing out |
| 4 <i>Vicchiddaka</i> | – a corpse cut in the middle |
| 5 <i>Vikhāyitaka</i> | – a gnawed corpse |
| 6 <i>Vikkhittaka</i> | – a scattered corpse |
| 7 <i>Hatavikkhittaka</i> | – a cracked and scattered
corpse |
| 8 <i>Lohitaka</i> | – a blood-smearred corpse |
| 9 <i>Puḥuvaka</i> | – a worm-infested corpse |
| 10 <i>Aṭṭhika</i> | – a skeleton |

In *asubha bhāvanā* the highest concentration attainable is the first ***rūpāvacara jhāna-samādhi***.

(d) Ten Recollections

(*Anussatis*)

'*Anussati*' means repeated reflection or recollection or constant mindfulness.

In *Anguttaranikāya Ekadhamma Pāḷi* the Buddha said, “Oh Bhikkhu, if one of the ten anussatis is practised and developed repeatedly, making it a habit, then it will lead to the disgust of the endless round of rebirth, to the abandonment of attachment, to the cessation and pacification of lust and other mental defilements, to the insight of the three characteristic marks of existence, to the enlightenment of the four Noble Truths, and to the realization of *Nibbāna*.”

The ten anussatis are:

- 1 *Buddhānussati* – recollection of the Buddha
- 2 *Dhammānussati* – recollection of the Dhamma
- 3 *Samghānussati* – recollection of the Saṃgha
- 4 *Sīlānussati* – recollection of morality (sīla)
- 5 *Cāgānussati* – recollection of generosity (cāga)
- 6 *Devatānussati* – recollection of deities
- 7 *Maraṇānussati* – recollection of death
- 8 *Kāyagatāsati* – mindfulness of the thirty-two parts of the body
- 9 *Ānāpānassati* – mindfulness of breathing
- 10 *Upasamānussati* – recollection of peace

The eight anussatis (Nos. 1–7+10) will develop the mind to the state of access concentration (*upacārasamādhi*). *kāyagatāsati* to the first *rūpāvacara-jhāna*, and *ānāpānassati* to the five *rūpāvacara-jhānas*.

(e) Four Divine Abidings*(Brahmavihāra)*

'*Brahmavihāra*' means 'noble living' or 'sublime living' or 'divine abiding'. Anyone who is in the engrossing state of *jhāna* while practising one of the four *brahmavihāras* is said to be living nobly and sublimely like *brahmas*, or he is in the sublime or divine state of living.

- 1 *Mettā* – loving-kindness
- 2 *Karuṇā* – compassion
- 3 *Muditā* – sympathetic and appreciative joy
- 4 *Upekkhā* – equanimity

Systematic meditation on *mettā*, *karuṇā* or *muditā* can develop the four *rūpāvacara jhānas* in the fivefold method whereas *upekkhābhāvanā* can lead to the fifth *rūpāvacara-jhāna*.

(f) Four Immaterial States*(Āruppas)*

The following four immaterial states or bases are used as meditation subjects to develop the four *arūpāvacara jhānas*.

- 1 *Ākāsa* – boundless space
- 2 *Viññāṇa* – boundless consciousness
- 3 *Ākincañña* – nothingness
- 4 *N'eva-saññā-nāsaññā* – neither perception nor non-perception

In practice one has to develop the five *rūpāvacara-jhānas* first by meditating on one of the *kaṣiṇas*, and then making the *fifth jhāna* as the base, one climbs higher to four *arūpāvacara jhānas* by meditating on the *ārūppas* in the order described above.

(g) Perception of Repulsiveness in Nutriment
(*Āhāre-paṭikūla-saññā*)

'*Āhāre*' means 'nutriment or food', '*paṭikūla*', 'repulsiveness', and '*saññā*', 'perception'.

So '*āhārepaṭikūla-saññā*' is the meditation intended to develop the perception of repulsiveness on food. This perception will subdue the craving for good food (*rasa-taṇhā*).

(h) Definition of the Four Elements
(*Catudhātu-vavatthāna*)

'*Catudhātu*' means the four primary elements viz., *pathavī*, *āpo*, *tejo* and *vāyo*.

'*Vavatthāna*' means the knowledge of characterizing (the elements).

The four primary elements form the basis of all corporeal phenomena. They are present in every part and particle of our body. So they must be characterized by their distinct properties.

The Meditation on *āhārepaṭikūla-saññā* and *catudhātu-vavatthāna* lead to the neighbourhood concentration.

- **Temperament (Carita)**

- (a) **Six Types of Temperament**

Different persons have different temperament or personal nature. Six types of temperament are to be noted.

- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Rāga-carita</i> | – greedy temperament |
| 2 | <i>Dosa-carita</i> | – hating temperament |
| 3 | <i>Moha-carita</i> | – deluded temperament |
| 4 | <i>Saddhā-carita</i> | – faithful temperament |
| 5 | <i>Buddhi-carita</i> | – intelligent temperament |
| 6 | <i>Vitakka-carita</i> | – speculative temperament |

In accordance with six types of temperament six types of persons are to be noted.

The greedy-natured person, who has greedy temperament, used to dress smartly, likes perfumes and ornaments, and indulges in sense pleasure.

The hate-natured person, who has hating temperament, is generally short-tempered and gets angry easily even over trivial things.

The dull-natured person, who has deluded temperament, is generally perplexed, distracted and wavering with sceptical doubt.

The faithful-natured person, who has faithful temperament, is generally very pious and venerates the sacred Triple Gem frequently.

The intelligent-natured person, who has intelligent temperament, relies on reasons and would not believe easily.

The ruminating-natured person, who has speculative temperament, thinks over this and that without accomplishing much.

(b) Suitability of Kammatṭhāna to Carita

The right coupling of temperament with meditation-subject is beneficial for quick development of mental concentration (*samādhi*).

1 The greedy-natured person with greedy temperament should exercise one of the ten signs of foulness (*asubha-kammattṭhānas*) or *kāyagatāsati kammattṭhāna* as these meditation-subjects can subdue lust and passion effectively.

2 The hate-natured person with hating temperament should practise the four divine abidings (*brahmavihāra-kammattṭhānas*) or one of the four colour *kasiṇas*, that is *nīla*, *pīta*, *lohita* or *odāta kasiṇa*. These meditation subjects are pure and serene and can delight persons who practise them.

3 The dull-natured person with deluded temperament as well as the ruminating-natured person with speculative temperament should practise *ānāpānassati*. The minds of these persons are restless and distracted because of restlessness (*uddhacca*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) and applied thought (*vitakka*). In *ānāpānassati*, the in-going breath and the out-going breath have to be noted mindfully. As the in-breath and the out-breath occur rhythmically, *ānāpānassati* can arrest the mind and calm down a restless mind quickly.

4 The faithful-natured person with faithful temperament should practise *Buddhānussati*, *Dhammānussati*, *Samghānussati*, *Sīlānussati*, *Cāgānussati* and *Devatānussati*. The faith (*saddhā*) in this person is al-

ready strong, and it will be further strengthened to great benefits by undertaking these *anussatis*.

5 The intelligent-natured person with intelligent temperament should exercise *marañānussati*, *upasamānussati*, *āhārepaṭikūla-saññā*, or *catudhātu-vavatthāna*. These meditation subjects are deep and subtle, and thus they can stimulate and strengthen the wisdom of the intelligent-natured person.

6 The meditation subjects which are suitable to all types of persons are the earth *kaṣiṇa*, the water *kaṣiṇa*, the fire *kaṣiṇa*, the air *kaṣiṇa*, the light *kaṣiṇa*, the space *kaṣiṇa* and the four immaterial states (*ārūppas*).

The above coupling is made in the form of direct opposition and complete suitability. But actually there is no meditation subject nor profitable development that does not suppress greed, hatred, and delusion, and promote faith, mindfulness, mental concentration, wisdom, etc.

References:

- 1 “*Visuddhi Magga*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated into Myanmar by Ven. *Nandamālā*, Vol.I, pp. 160-227.
- 2 “*The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli*, pp. 84-126.
- 3 “*The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Pe Maung Tin*, PTS, pp. 97-137.

Review Questions

- 1 Describe the role of meditation in the Noble Eight-fold Path.
- 2 What is meditation? How does tranquility-meditation differ from insight-meditation?
- 3 What is samatha-bhāvana? What are its purpose and objective?
- 4 What is mental concentration? Why should we develop it?
- 5 What is the subject of meditation? Describe the forty subjects of tranquility-meditation briefly.
- 6 Describe the six types of temperament and the meditation subjects that suit each type of temperament.
- 7 Describe the ten kasiṇas. What can we attain from kasiṇa meditation?
- 8 What are the ten signs of foulness? Why did the Buddha advise newly ordained bhikkhus to practise the meditation on foulness?
- 9 Describe the ten Anussatis. How did the Buddha comment on the practice of anussatis?
10. Why did the Buddha exhort bhikkhus to develop concentration?

CHAPTER IV PREPARATION FOR MEDITATION

Preparation in Brief

If one wishes to undertake tranquility meditation to develop the right concentration (*sammā-samādhi*) one should establish oneself first in pure morality.

Then one should sever any of the ten impediments that one may have, and find a good teacher and friend (*kalyāṇamitta*) who can teach and direct a meditation subject which is suitable to one's temperament. After that one should find a suitable place for meditation and cut off the lesser impediments. One should not overlook any of the directions for development. This is in brief.

Preparation in Detail

(a) Cutting off Major Impediments

There are ten major impediments (*Palibodha*) which can obstruct the development of concentration. They must be cut off before one undertakes meditation.

1 Dwelling (*Āvāsa*)

A single inner room or a single hut or a whole monastery is called a dwelling. It is an impediment only for someone whose mind is occupied with the activities going on in the building or who has many belongings stored up there.

2 Family (*Kula*)

It means a family consisting of relatives or supporters. It is an impediment to one who is attached to the

family members and lives in close association with them. If one minds only one's business without unnecessary dealings with others, even one's parents are no impediment for one.

3 Gain (*Lābha*)

It means the four requisites. How are they an impediment? Wherever a well-known bhikkhu goes, people give him a large supply of requisites. With giving blessings to them and teaching them the Dhamma, he gets no chance to exercise meditation. From sunrise till the first watch of the night he never breaks his association with people.

Thus these requisites are an impediment for him. He should leave his group and wander by himself where he is not known. This is the way this impediment is severed.

4 Class (*Gaṇa*)

Class is a group of students of Suttas or Abhidhamma. If one occupies oneself with teaching and instructing them, then one has no chance to attend to meditation. Thus that group is an impediment for that person. He should sever that impediment thus: if little remains to be taught, he should finish teaching that off and go to the forest.

If much still remains to be taught, he should request another teacher to finish the teaching. If he cannot find any teacher, he should take leave of the class, saying "I have a task to see to, friends; go where it suits you", and he should do his own work.

5 Business (*Kamma*)

It means a new business matter such as a new building work (*navakamma*). One who is engaged in this matter must know what has been done, what has not been done, what material has or has not been acquired, who is going to do what, etc. So it is always an impediment. It should be severed in the following way.

If little work remains, it should be completed. If much remains, it should be handed over to the community of bhikkhus or to bhikkhus who are entrusted with the community's affairs. If it is for himself, it should be handed over to those whom he entrusts with his own affairs. But if these are not available, he should relinquish it to the community and depart.

6 Travel (*Journey*)

It means going on a journey. If one has to go somewhere to attend to some duty or to get some requisite available there and he cannot rest content without getting it, that will be an impediment. Even if he undertakes meditation without taking the travel, he will find it hard to get rid of the thoughts about the journey. So he should take the travel first and finish the business before he undertakes meditation.

7 Kinsfolk (*Ñāṭi*)

In a community of bhikkhus kinsfolk means teacher, preceptor, pupil, coresident and those with the same teacher or preceptor as oneself. In a household family kinsfolk means mother, father, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, and so on.

When they are sick, one must attend to them; so they become an impediment. That impediment should be severed by nursing them till they are cured.

8 Illness (*Affliction*)

It means any kind of illness. When it actually inflicts or tortures one, it becomes an impediment. It should be cured by taking medicine and proper treatment. But if it is not cured in a few days, one must admonish oneself thus, “I am not a slave or hireling of this body of mine; I have gone through endless agony for carrying this body through the beginningless round of rebirths”, and attend to meditation.

9 Books (*Scripture*)

It means responsibility for studying or teaching the scriptures (*pariyatti*). It is an impediment only for one who is constantly busy with reading, studying, and reciting the scriptures, but not for others. One should keep away the books while one undertakes meditation.

10 Supernormal Powers (*Abhiññā*)

The supernormal powers of an ordinary person are hard to maintain, and the slightest thing breaks them. However, they are an impediment for insight but not for concentration, since they are obtained through concentration. So the supernormal powers are an impediment that should be severed by one who seeks insight.

(b) The Search for a Qualified Teacher

A qualified teacher here means a good friend who can give suitable meditation subjects.

Meditation subjects are of two kinds:

- (1) *Sabbatthaka Kammatthāna* – meditation subjects desirable in all matters, and
- (2) *Parihāriya Kammatthāna* – meditation subject to be meditated always.

A qualified teacher should know how to direct both these two kinds of meditation subjects.

Sabbatthaka Kammatthāna includes:-

- (i) development of loving-kindness (*metta-bhāvanā*)
- (ii) recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*)
- (iii) recollection of the sign of foulness (*asubha-bhāvanā*)
- (iv) recollection of death (*maraṇānussati*)

These four subjects of meditation are also known as the four Guardian Meditations. They should be undertaken first to protect oneself from all dangers.

Parihāriya kammatthā is one of the forty meditation subjects that is suitable to a man's own temperament. It is 'special' (*parihāriya*) because it must be carried constantly about with him, that is, he must always meditate on it and because it is the approximate cause for each higher stage of development.

A good teacher and friend (*kalyānamitta*) should be able to teach the above two kinds of meditation. In addition to that he must possess special qualities such as these:

“He is adorable, respectful and praise-worthy; he knows how to admonish others and he is ready to accept the admonishment of others; he utters profound speech and he does not urge without a reason”. (A.iv, 32)

Because of the words beginning “*Ananda*, it is owing to my being a good friend to them that living beings subject to birth are freed from birth,” (S.i, 88) it is only the Buddha who possesses all the qualities of the good friend. Since that is so, it is best to take a meditation subject from him while he is alive.

But after his final attainment of Nibbāna, it is proper to take it from any one of the eighty great disciples still living. When they are no longer available, a person who wants to practise a particular meditation subject, should take it from an Arahant, who has, by means of that meditation subject, attained fourfold or fivefold *jhāna*, and has reached the destruction of cankers by undertaking insight-meditation on the basis of *jhāna*-concentration.

But will an Arahant declare himself to be an Arahant? Why not? He will declare himself when he knows that his instructions will be carried out. Did not the *Elder Assagutta* spread out his leather mat in the air and sitting cross-legged on it explain a meditation subject to a bhikkhu who was starting his meditation subject, because he knew that bhikkhu would carry out his instructions.

Now if someone with cankers destroyed is not available, then one should take a meditation subject from a Non-returner, a Once-returner, a Stream-enterer, an or-

dinary man who has obtained *jhāna*, one who knows three *piṭakas*, one who knows two *piṭakas*, one who knows one *piṭika*, in descending order according to availability. If even one who knows one *piṭaka* is not available, then it should be taken from one who is familiar with one collection (*Nikāya*) together with its commentary, and one who is himself conscientious.

Nowadays there are many meditation centres and many meditation teachers, usually teaching in the way they have learned from their immediate teachers. Whether these teachings are in accord with the Buddha's instructions or not can be checked with *Tipiṭaka* scriptures or with *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification) which is an authentic compilation of the *Buddha's* instructions on Threefold Noble Training written by *Venerable Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa*.

It is most convenient to learn meditation under the direct guidance of a qualified teacher who is a Good Friend as well as the giver of a meditation subject. The choice of a meditation subject to suit one's temperament has been described earlier.

(c) The Search for a Suitable Place for Meditation

A monastery which has any one of the following eighteen faults is unfavourable to the development of concentration.

1 Large Monastery

Many people with varying aims gather in a large

monastery. They conflict with one another and neglect their duties such as sweeping the floors and setting out water for drinking and washing. If one does not attend to these duties, one would commit a wrong doing in the breach of duty. If one does it, one loses time. Also when one sits for meditation, one is distracted by the loud noises of novices and young bhikkus.

However, one can live in a large monastery where everyone does his duties and there are no disturbances.

2 New Monastery

Here there is much new building activity. If one does not take part in it, one will be criticized. If, however, one is allowed to do ascetic's duties as much as one likes, one can live there.

3 Dilapidated Monastery

Here there is much that needs repair. If one does not repair even one's lodging, one will be criticized. If one sees to the repairs, one's meditation will suffer.

4 Monastery near the Main Road

Visitors keep arriving night and day. One has to give up one's lodging to those who come late. So there is no opportunity to practise one's meditation. But one can live in such a monastery if there are no disturbances from visitors.

5 Monastery with a Pond

People come to fetch drinking water making much noise. The noise is a serious disturbance to meditation. If there is no noise, one may live there.

6 Monastery with Edible Leaves

If one sits to meditate at a place where there are many sorts of edible leaves, then women vegetable-gatherers will sing as they pick leaves nearby, disturbing one with sounds of the opposite sex.

7 A place with Flowering Shrubs

The same kind of danger exists at a place where there are many sorts of flowering shrubs in bloom.

8 Monastery with Fruit Trees

If there are many sorts of fruits such as mangoes, rose-apples and jack-fruits, people will ask for them. If one does not give them any, they get angry and abuse one. If one tries to stop them when one sees them taking fruits by force, they may quarrel with one.

9 Famous Monastery

If one lives in a monastery that is famous, people will come to pay homage to the bhikkhus living there, thinking they are Arahants. This will cause inconveniences. But if it suits one, one can live there by night and go elsewhere by day.

10 Monastery near a Town or Village

Here objects of the opposite sex come into focus. Government servants may come and stay in the middle of the monastery.

11 Monastery with nearby Timber Trees

People come to gather firewood, making a lot of noises. Some cut trees in the monastery to build houses

with. If one tries to stop them, they will abuse and even try to evict one.

12 **Monastery surrounded by Fields**

Farmers make a threshing floor in the middle of the monastery itself. They thresh corn and dry it there. They also sleep there causing great inconvenience.

13 **Monastery with incompatible Persons**

Incompatible bhikkhus are mutually hostile and they often clash with one another. It is very difficult to live among them.

14 **Monastery near a Water-port or Land-port**

People constantly arrive either by ship or by caravan. They crowd around in the monastery, asking for space and drinking water, thus causing great inconvenience.

15 **Monastery near Border Countries**

People living in border areas usually have no trust in the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Samgha*. So it is hard to get the requisites.

16 **Monastery near the Frontier of a Kingdom**

That place may be attacked by one king and then by the other king, thinking 'It does not submit to my rule.' A *bhikkhu* living there may be suspected for spying and consequently brought to ruin.

17 Unsuitable Monastery

A monastery frequented by the opposite sex or haunted by non-human beings is unsuitable for practising meditation.

18 Lack of Good Friends

Where it is impossible to find a good friend as a teacher to teach and guide one how to carry out meditation, the lack of good friends there is a serious fault.

- **A Suitable Monastery**

A monastery endowed with the following five qualities is suitable for meditation.

1 It is not too far, not too near, and has a path for going to and coming from the village of alms resort.

2 It is little frequented by people with little sound by day, and at night it is quiet with no human voices.

3 It is free from insect-bites, and there is no contact with gadflies, mosquitoes, wind, burning sun, and creeping animals.

4 For one who lives there robes, alms-food, lodging and medicines are easily available.

5 In that monastery there are elder *bhikkhus* who are learned, well-versed in scriptures, observers of the *Dhamma*, observers of the *Vinaya*, and observers of the codes of moral principles and practice. When, from time to time one asks them questions, they reveal the unrevealed, explain the unexplained, and remove doubts about the many things that raise doubts.

A bhikkhu-yogī (meditator) should avoid a monastery unfavourable to the development of concentration and go to live in one that is favourable.

A lay-yogī should also choose a secluded quiet place where he is not disturbed by people for any reason, where food, lodging, and medical treatment are conveniently available, and where it is favourable to develop concentration under the guidance of a qualified teacher who is a Good Friend as well as a giver of meditation subject.

(d) Cutting off Minor Impediments

A *bhikkhu*, living in a favourable monastery, should sever any minor impediments that he may still have.

1. Long head-hair, nails, and beard should be cut.
2. Mending and patching of old clothes should be done.
3. Those old robes that are soiled should be dyed.
4. If there is a stain on the bowl, the bowl should be baked.
5. The room, the bed, the chair, etc., should be cleaned up. One's beddings and living places should be neatly kept.

A lay-yogī should also sever similar minor impediments.

(e) Dedication to the Blessed One

A meditator should dedicate himself to the Blessed One in this way: “Blessed One. I relinquish this my person (or my body and mind) to you”.

There are many benefits for doing so, for without having thus dedicated himself when living in a remote abode, he might be unable to stand fast if a frightening object makes its appearance, and he might return to a village abode, become associated with laymen, take up improper search and come to ruin.

But when he has dedicated himself to the *Buddha*, no fear arises in him if a frightening object makes its appearance; in fact only joy arises in him as he reflects: “Have you not wisely already dedicated yourself to the Enlightened One?”

Also when he encounters severe bodily pain, hardship, slow mental development, some disturbances and inconveniences, one can endure better by reasoning thus: “I have already relinquished this body and mind to the Buddha; they do not belong to me any more; so why should I worry about them?”

(f) Dedication to the Teacher

A yogī should dedicate himself to the teacher in this way: “Venerable sir, I relinquish this my person (or my body and mind) to you.”

For one who has not dedicated himself thus becomes unresponsive to correction, hard to speak to, and unamenable to advice. He may go where he likes without asking the teacher. Consequently the teacher does not help him with either material things such as robes or the Dhamma such as giving advice and training him in meditation books. Failing to get these two kinds of help (*āmisā*

and *dhamma*), he finds no footing in the Dispensation, and he soon comes down to misconducting himself or to the lay state.

But if he has dedicated himself to the teacher, the teacher has the right to admonish him, and he is not unresponsive to correction, he does not go about as he likes, he is easy to speak to, and he lives in association with the teacher. He gets the twofold help from the teacher and attains growth, development and fulfilment in the Dispensation.

(g) Sincere Inclination and Sincere Resolution

A meditator should be endowed with six types of sincere, good inclination for it is one who is so inclined will arrive at one of the three kinds of enlightenment, that is, the path-wisdom of an *Arahant* (*sāvaka-bodhi*), the path-wisdom of a Silent Buddha (*Pacceka-bhodi*), and the path-wisdom of a fully-enlightened *Buddha* (*sammāsambodhi*).

The six types of inclination are stated thus: “six kinds of inclination lead to the maturing of the enlightenment of those who are to be enlightened. With the inclination to non-greed, those who are to be enlightened see the fault in greed. With the inclination to non-hate, they see the fault in hate. With the inclination to non-delusion, they see the fault in delusion. With the inclination to renunciation, they see the fault in household life. With the inclination to seclusion, they see the fault in association with companions. With the inclination to emancipation from the round of rebirths (*samsāra*) they see the fault in

all kinds of becoming and future existences.”

A yogī should have sincerity of inclination in these six modes, because Stream-enterers, Once-returners, Non-returners, *Arahants*, *Pacceka Buddhas*, and Fully-enlightened Ones, whether past, future or present, all arrive at the distinction peculiar to each by means of these same six types of inclination.

Moreover, a meditator should be whole-heartedly resolved on concentration, he should respect concentration, and incline to concentration. He should be resolved on Nibbāna, he should respect Nibbāna, and incline to Nibbāna.

When the meditator has such sincere inclination and whole-hearted resolution, the teacher who can penetrate his mind will know his temperament and give him a suitable meditation subject. If the teacher cannot penetrate his mind, he will ask the yogī relevant questions to find out his temperament and give a suitable meditation subject.

References:

- 1 “*Visuddhi Magga*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated into Myanmar by *Ven. Nandamālā*, Vol.I, pp. 171-237.
- 2 “*The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli*, pp. 84-121.
- 3 “*The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Pe Maung Tin*, pp. 97-137.

Review Questions

- 1 What are the major impediments that obstruct meditation? How can they be cut off?
- 2 What are *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas* and *parihāriya kammaṭṭhānas*? How can one find a qualified teacher to teach them to one?
- 3 How can one find a suitable place for meditation?
- 4 Which type of monastery is unsuitable and which suitable for meditation?
- 5 How and why should one dedicate oneself (i) to the Blessed One, and (ii) to the teacher before one undertakes meditation?
- 6 In what way should a meditator be endowed with (i) sincere inclination, and (ii) sincere resolution?
- 7 What are the qualities of a good teacher? How can one find such a teacher?
- 8 What will happen if we undertake meditation without first cutting off impediments?
- 9 What are the benefits of dedicating oneself (i) to the Buddha, and (ii) to the teacher before one undertakes meditation?
- 10 Comment on the statement: “Six kinds of inclination lead to the maturing of the enlightenment of those who are to be enlightened?”

PART II

SAMATHA (Basic Level)

Paṭi 112

CHAPTER V
EARTH KASIṂA
(Pathavī kasiṁa)

- **Making an Earth Kasiṁa**

An earth kasiṁa can be made either as a fixture or as a portable one.

A fixture should be made in a secluded place by knocking stakes into the ground in the form of a lotus petal, lacing them over with creepers. Some suitable earth is spread on the confined ground, and a disk, a span and four fingers across, is made on top of that with quite pure dawn-coloured clay, which is picked clean of grass, rods, gravel, and sand, and well kneaded.

To make a portable earth-kasiṁa a piece of cloth, leather or matting is smeared with the quite pure and clean dawn-coloured clay in the form of a disk of the size already mentioned. At the time of the preliminary work it should be laid on the ground and looked at.

The disk of dawn-coloured clay should be scraped down with a stone trowel to make it as even as a drum. A wooden trowel should not be used for scraping for it turns the clay into a bad colour. The earth kasiṁa is now ready for use.

- **Reflecting on the Earth Kasiṁa**

A meditator should sit on a seat a span and four fingers high, and two and a half cubits [one cubit = elbow to finger-tip] from the kasiṁa disk. For the kasiṁa does not appear vividly to him if he sits further off than that; and if

he sits nearer than that, faults in the kasiṇa appear. If he sits higher up, he has to look at the kasiṇa with his neck bent; and if he sits lower down, his knees ache.

Then he should review the dangers of sense desires in the way beginning: “Sense objects give little enjoyment” (M. i, 91). He should arouse an ardent wish to attain jhāna for it is the cause for the escape from sense desires as well as the cause for the emancipation from all sufferings.

He should next arouse joy of happiness by recollecting the attributes of the *Buddha*, the *Dhamma*, and the *Samgha*. He also develops respect in the training by thinking: “Now this is the training undertaken by all *Buddhas*, *Pacceka Buddhas* and Noble Disciples.” He should then arouse strenuous effort by thinking: “I shall surely come to know the taste of the bliss of seclusion (*vivekasukha*).”

After that he should open his eyes moderately, apprehend with the mind the sign apprehended by the eye in the earth kasiṇa and proceed to develop it. If he opens his eyes too wide, they get fatigued and the kasiṇa disk becomes too obvious, which prevents the arising of *nimitta* (sign or image). If he opens his eyes too little, the kasiṇa disk is not distinct, his mind becomes retard, which also prevents the *nimitta* from arising. So he should apprehend the sign and develop it with his eyes moderately open as if he were seeing the reflection of his face in the looking-glass.

The dawn colour of the kasiṇa should not be thought about, though it cannot be denied that it is apprehended by eye-consciousness. If one pays attention to colour, one's meditation will be mingled with the meditation on colour kasiṇa. Also the characteristic of hardness of the earth-element should not be given attention for distinguishing the meditation on earth kasiṇa from the meditation on elements.

But rather, while not ignoring the colour, the meditation should focus his attention on the kasiṇa disk as earth, continuously reflecting on it by any one of the names for earth such as “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth”. He should go on reflecting in this way with open eyes, closing them intermittently, a hundred times, a thousand times, and even more than that, until the *acquired sign (uggahanimitta)* arises.

When this sign appears, the meditator can see the earth kasiṇa vividly in his mind with closed eyes as vividly as he has seen it with open eyes. When this acquired sign appears, he should no longer sit in that place: he should return to his own quarters and go on developing it sitting there. If the new unstable concentration vanishes through some unsuitable encounter, he will lose the acquired sign. If this happens, he should go back to the place where the kasiṇa is kept and develop the acquired sign again.

After returning to his quarters, he should sit comfortably and reflect on the acquired image with closed eyes as “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth” with strenuous effort as if striking it repeatedly with the right thought.

He tries to control his mind from wandering away, recalling it back whenever it goes astray. If pain and discomfort arises in his body, he should tolerate it as much as possible, ignoring it and focussing his attention on the acquired sign. When the pain becomes unbearable, he can mindfully change his posture to ease the pain.

As he keeps on reflecting on the acquired sign, the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) eventually become well suppressed, the defilements subside, the mind becomes concentrated with access concentration, and the *counter sign* (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*) arises.

The meditator now attains the *access jhāna* (*upacārajhāna*) meaning he is close to meditative absorption (*jhāna*). It is called access jhāna because it is at the entrance of the first jhāna.

Now it is very difficult generally to develop the counter sign. Therefore if the meditator is able to arrive at absorption (*jhāna*) in that same session by extending the sign and reflecting on it, it is good. If not, then he must guard the sign diligently as if it were the embryo of a Universal Monarch.

In order to raise the concentration further, he focusses his mind on the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa, reflecting “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth”. When the sign becomes stable, he extends or enlarges it gradually by his will-power in this way: “May the counter sign grow larger by one finger, two fingers, three fingers. - -” and so on until it has been extended indefinitely in all directions.

He now focusses his attention on the extended sign and reflects on “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth” until absorption (*jhāna*) occurs in the cognitive series (*vīthi*). He now attains the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*, and he can develop it again and again by reflecting on the extended counter sign which remains firmly in his memory or perception.

When a beginner has reached the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*, he should enter upon it often without reviewing it much. For the first *jhāna* factors occur crudely and weakly in one who reviews it much. Because of that, they do not become conditions for developing higher *jhānas*. He should therefore acquire mastery in five ways first of all with respect to the first *jhāna*. He can then develop higher *jhānas* step by step until he attains the fifth *rūpāvacara jhāna*.

The first *jhāna* abandons five factors and possesses five factors. The five factors abandoned are the five hindrances, and the five factors that the *jhāna* possesses are the five *jhāna* factors.

- **Five Hindrances or Enemies (*Nīvaraṇas*)**

The five hindrances, known as *nīvaraṇas*, defile, debase, inflict and agitate the mind to be restless, wavering and wandering from one sense object to another. They make us heedless and forgetful to carry out meritorious deeds. They hinder and prevent the arising of wholesome thoughts, good deeds, *jhānas*, and *maggas*. So they are our greatest enemies. We must wrestle with them all the time in order

to suppress them and drive them away from the mind. They represent the following immoral mental factors (*akusala cetasikas*).

- 1 *Kāmacchanda* – sense desire or greed (*lobha*); it influences the mind most of the time to crave for sensuous pleasure and to wander from one sense object to another.
- 2 *Vyāpāda* – ill-will, anger or hatred (*dosa*); it overwhelms and burn the mind when the mind harbours anger, hatred, grief, sorrow, worry, dissatisfaction, etc.
- 3 *Thina-middha* – sloth and torpor; they make the mind dull, morbid, inactive, lazy and drowsy.
- 4 *Uddhacca-kukkucca* – restlessness and remorse; they make the mind restless, fluttering and remorseful for one's wrong doing.
- 5 *Vicikicchā* – sceptical doubt or perplexity; it makes the mind wavering, undecisive, and perplexed obstructing wholesome thoughts and meritorious deeds.

In the beautiful similes given by the Buddha in *Aṅguttara Nikāya* and also in *Mahāvagga Saṃyutta*, *Saṅgārava Sutta*, sense-desire is compared with water mixed with manifold colours, ill-will with boiling water, sloth and torpor with water covered with mosses, restlessness and remorse with agitated water whipped by the wind, and sceptical doubt with turbid and muddy water.

Just as in such water one cannot perceive one's own reflection, so also in the presence of any one of these five mental hindrances, one cannot clearly discern one's own benefit, nor that of others, nor that of both.

• **Five Powers or Friends**

(Balas and Indriyas)

There are five mental factors which are included among the thirty-seven components of enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya*) and which can act both as spiritual powers or strengths (*balas*) and as spiritual faculties (*indriyas*).

As spiritual faculties they have the ability to control their concomitants and the mind, and as powers or strengths they can stand firm and unshakeable against the opposing force. So if we cultivate and develop these powers, which are our innate qualities, we can successfully combat the enemies called the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*).

- 1 *Saddhā* – faith or confidence in the Triple Gem, the law of kamma, and the Noble Practice.
- 2 *Vīriya* – effort or energy which is identical with the right effort (*sammāvāyama*).
- 3 *Sati* – mindfulness which is identical with the right mindfulness (*sammāsati*).
- 4 *Samādhi* – concentration or one-pointedness of the mind: it is the same as the right concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).
- 5 *Paññā* – knowledge or wisdom which is identical with the right understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi*).

We can see that *vīriya*, *sati*, and *samādhi* are the three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path that constitute the training of concentration (*samādhi-sikkhā*). It is vital to develop them in order to attain the right concentration. But in this noble task, one needs the help and guidance of wisdom or the right understanding which is the most important factor of the Noble Eightfold Path. Again the right understanding must be supplemented and incorporated with the right thought which is *sammāsaṅkappa* or *vitakka*.

Saddhā is the well-established confidence and faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma including the Noble Practice, the Saṅgha and kamma. It is not blind faith; rather, it is rooted and associated with wisdom. It has the ability to cool down and purify the mind by driving away the hindrances. It also has the ability to lead the way in performing meritorious deeds.

When *saddhā* is strong, *vīriya* also becomes strong and steadfast. It can be developed to the level of the unfaltering concentrated effort of one who vows:

*“Let me be reduced to skin and bone;
let my blood and flesh dry up;
let my life come to an end;
but I will not stop till I succeed!”*

When the effort is strong, then mindfulness of the meditation - subject is strong, and this in turn will lead to the development of concentration. When one attains the right concentration, one can observe the ultimate realities as they really are, and so one can develop insight knowledge and finally the Path-wisdom.

In fighting against the enemies the five powers must work in unison to be effective.

Saddhā (faith) and *Paññā* (wisdom) should balance each other, because too much faith leads to unreasonable belief, and too much inquiry and criticism leads to no concentration.

Similarly *vīriya* (effort) and *samādhi* (concentration) should balance each other, because too much effort and weak concentration will lead to the restlessness of the mind whereas weak effort and excessive concentration will lead to drowsiness.

Sati (mindfulness) need not be balanced with any power; the greater the mindfulness, the better it is.

- **Five Essential Qualities**

(*Padhāniyaṅga*)

A meditator should be endowed with the following essential main qualities according to the statement of the Buddha in *Sutta Pātheya*, 57, and *Aṅguttara-nikāya*, *Pañcaka Nipāta*, *Padhāniyaṅga Sutta*.

- 1 *Saddhā* – faith and confidence in the Triple Gem and the Noble Practice;
- 2 *Appabādhatā* – good health with the ability to digest food well;
- 3 *Asatṭhatā* – righteousness and truthfulness. without crookedness towards coresidents and the teacher;

- 4 *Āraddavīriyatā* – strenuous and steadfast effort to discard evils and develop good qualities fully;
- 5 *Udayatthagāmini-pañña* – the noble wisdom that can discern the arising and dissolving of the five aggregates of existence, and break the mass of defilements to arrive at the end of suffering (*Nibbāna*).

- **Five Jhāna Factors**

Jhāna, the state of meditative absorption, is a combination of five jhāna factors. These factors are mental concomitants (*cetasikas*) which associate with both moral and immoral minds.

In meditation moral minds are developed repeatedly and they contain jhāna factors. At first these factors are not strong, but they become stronger with the progress of meditation. When they are fully developed, they become very strong and keep the mind focussed at a point on the meditation subject. Thus the state of one-pointedness of the mind, that is jhāna, is established.

The five jhāna-factors are as follows.

- 1 *Vitakka* – initial application that applies the mind onto the sense object; it is also translated as applied thought;
- 2 *Vicāra* – sustained application that keeps on applying the mind onto the sense object again and again so that one observes the object discursively; it is also translated as discursive thought;

- 3 *Pīti* – joy, rapture or pleasurable interest in the sense object;
- 4 *Vedanā* – feeling or sensation which occurs in five types. The two types that occur in *jhāna* are:
 - (a) *Sukha* – pleasant or agreeable feeling, bliss or happiness,
 - (b) *Upekkhā* – neutral feeling, that is, neither pleasant nor painful feeling.
- 5 *Ekaggatā* – *samādhi* or concentration or one-pointedness of the mind.

In the meditation on *pathavī kasiṇa* or any other meditation object, *vitakka* applies the mind onto the meditation subject and temporarily inhibits sloth and torpor from arising.

Vicāra applies the mind onto the meditation object again and again, observing the object discursively; it temporarily inhibits sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) from arising.

Pīti develops joy and pleasurable interest in the meditation-object; it temporarily inhibits ill-will (*dosa*) from arising.

Pīti is also a precursor of *sukha* (pleasant feeling). *Pīti* creates an interest in the object while *sukha* enables one to enjoy the object. *Sukha* holds the mind to stay longer on the object by its bliss; it temporarily drives away restlessness and remorse (*uddhacca* and *kukkucca*).

Ekaggatā unites the *citta* and its concomitants and fixes them on the sense object to reach the state of one-pointedness. It temporarily inhibits sense desire (*kāmacchanda*) from agitating the mind.

When the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) subside temporarily, the mind does not wander away from the meditation subject as frequently as before. As the *jhāna* factors grow in strength, one can control one's mind better and better. He will notice *pīti* to be growing up in strength in five stages:

- (i) *Khuddaka pīti* – the thrill of joy that causes the flesh to creep;
- (ii) *Khaṇika pīti* – instantaneous joy that flows from head to toe like a flash of lightning;
- (iii) *Okkantika pīti* – the flood of joy like the breakers on a seashore;
- (iv) *Ubbegā pīti* – uplifting joy which may lift one to float in the air; and
- (v) *Phāraṇā pīti* – suffusing joy which pervades the whole body like oil diffusing into a lump of cotton or like a flood overflowing creeks and ponds.

When the meditator has developed some degree of mental concentration, he experiences the thrill of joy and then instantaneous joy from head to toe frequently. When the concentration rises higher, he enjoys the flood of joy as if he were riding waves at the sea-shore. When *ubbegā pīti* develops, he has the feeling that his body is

lifted up to the sky by the up-lifting joy. Then he will experience suffusing joy pervading throughout his body when *phāraṇā pīti* arises.

When joy (pīti) arises, tranquility (passaddhi) also arises; and when tranquility arises, pleasant sensation and happiness (sukha) also arises. When sukha arises, samādhi (concentration) also arises.

- **Three Stages of Meditation**

In developing a meditation subject, the meditation normally develops in three stages. The progress of meditation can be judged by the appearance of appropriate signs or images (*nimittas*).

1 Parikammā-bhāvaṇā – the preparatory stage of meditation

When one undertakes a meditation, the initial meditation subject which one observes with open eyes is called the preparatory sign (*parikamma nimitta*). In undertaking meditation on *pathavī kasiṇa*, for example, the earth-disk which one looks at with open eyes is called the preparatory sign or image.

Focussing one's attention on the earth disk by looking at it with open eyes, one meditates “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth” until one attains the acquired sign (*uggaha-nimitta*). This sign is the perception of the ini-

tial image that appears in the mind, and the meditator can see it with closed eyes as he has seen the earth disk with open eyes. It is identical with the preparatory sign in appearance.

He now continues his meditation with closed eyes focussing his attention on the acquired sign and reflect “*pathavī, pathavī*” or “earth, earth” repeatedly until the acquired sign changes into the counter-sign (*paṭibhāganimitta*). This sign is a thousand times more purified than the acquired sign. It is faultless and smooth like a mirror whereas the acquired sign contains faults like scratches and finger marks as in the initial sign.

The counter sign is also clear and bright. The change from the acquired sign to the counter sign is very distinct; it is like pulling out a looking glass from its leather case or like the moon’s disk coming out from behind dark clouds.

Now the meditation from the beginning to the time just before the counter sign appears is called the preparatory stage of meditation (*parikamma bhāvanā*). The mental concentration associated throughout with this meditation is called the preparatory concentration (*parikamma samādhi*). In other words the mental concentration from the beginning of meditation to the time just before the counter sign appears is called *parikamma samādhi*.

Parikamma bhāvanā means the meditation which prepares or paves the way for the arising of higher bhāvanās.

2 *Upacāra bhāvanā* – the neighbourhood stage of meditation.

“*Upacāra*” means “neighbourhood” or “moment of access”. *Upacāra bhāvanā* is that meditation which has come to the neighbourhood of *jhāna*, *magga*, and *phala*. It may also be regarded as the meditation which is about to enter the absorption stage of meditation called *appanā bhāvanā*.

Parikamma bhāvanā itself is developed into the *upacāra bhāvanā*. The object of *upacāra bhāvanā* is no longer the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*); it is the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*).

The concentration associated with *upacāra bhāvanā* is called ‘*upacāra samādhi*’ which is translated as ‘neighbourhood concentration’ or ‘access concentration’. This concentration is just below the concentration of the meditative absorption.

3 *Appanā bhāvanā* – the stage of meditative absorption

The meditation which has developed to *jhāna*, *magga*, or *phala* is called *appanā-bhāvanā*. The *jhāna*, *magga* or *phala* remains absorbed or fixed in their respective objects. The object of *jhāna* is the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) whereas the object of *magga* or *phala* is *Nibbāna*.

The concentration associated with the *appanā bhāvanā* is the ‘*appanā samādhi*’ that is, the *jhāna* concentration or the *magga* or *phala* concentration.

- **Bhāvanā and Kammaṭṭhāna**

- 1 *Parikamma-bhāvanā* is attainable in all the forty subjects of meditation.
- 2 *Parikamma-bhāvanā* and *upacāra-bhāvana* occur in eight *anussatis* as well as in *āhārepaṭikūlasaññā* and *catudhātu-vavatthāna*, totalling to ten *kammaṭṭhānas*.
- 3 All the three types of *bhāvanā* occur in the remaining 30 *kammaṭṭhānas* – viz., 10 *kasiṇas*, 10 *asubhas*, 4 *brahma-vihāras*, 4 *āruppas*, *kāyagatāsati* and *ānāpānassati*.

- **Meditation Sign or Image**

(*Bhāvanā Nimitta*)

The meditation sign or image is the ‘mental image’ obtained in meditation. Three types of meditation images are to be noted.

- 1 ***Parikamma nimitta* – the preparatory sign**

It is the initial meditation sign which one perceives in the mind when one looks at the meditation subject such as the earth *kasiṇa* with open eyes. It is the subject of the preparatory meditation.

- 2 ***Uggaha nimitta* – the acquired sign or image**

As the meditation proceeds, the meditator finds that he can observe the meditation subject, earth *kasiṇa* for example, without looking at it directly. This sign or image is identical to the initial preparatory sign or image, containing all the faults such as scratches and finger marks. He has acquired the sign in his mind, and he can see it with eyes closed.

The acquired sign is still unsteady and unclear. It arises when the mind has reached a certain degree of concentration. It is also the subject of the preparatory meditation.

3 *Paṭibhāga-nimitta* – the counter sign or image

As the meditation proceeds on, at the point when the concentration reaches the neighbourhood concentration, the acquired sign suddenly changes into a bright, clear and steady sign. It is many times brighter and clearer than the acquired sign. It is entirely free from faults such as unevenness, graininess, etc., that may be present in the original subject. It is immovable as if it remains fixed in the eye.

As soon as this counter sign arises, the stage of *upacāra bhāvanā* and neighbourhood concentration is reached. It is the subject of *upacāra bhāvanā* as well as *appanā bhāvanā*.

The Difference between the Acquired Sign and the Counter Sign

The acquired sign (*uggaha-nimitta*) appears in the mind of the meditator when he has developed his concentration to a certain degree. The sign or image is identical with the initial meditation subject when the subject is a kasina or a human corpse, and it appears in the mind as one has seen the initial meditation subject with open eyes. All the faults like scratches and finger marks in the earth kasina are apparent in the acquired sign.

The acquired sign changes to the counter sign when the meditator attains the access concentration or

neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra samādhi*). The counter sign appears as if breaking out from the acquired sign, and though it appears similar to the acquired sign, it is a hundred times, a thousand times more purified, like a looking glass drawn out from its leather case, like a mother-of-pearl dish well polished, like the moon's disk coming out from behind a cloud. In *Ānāpānassati* and some other meditation subjects, the acquired sign and the counter sign may appear in any form depending upon the perception of the meditator.

The counter sign is born only of perception in one who has obtained the neighbourhood concentration. It is much more stable than the acquired sign. As soon as it arises in the mind, the hindrances are well suppressed, the defilements subside, and the mind becomes concentrated in access concentration.

Suitability and Unsuitability

(*Sappāya and Asappāya*)

In developing the concentration, the meditator must abide by seven suitable conditions and avoid seven unsuitable conditions with respect to (1) abode, (2) resort, (3) speech, (4) person, (5) food, (6) climate, and (7) posture.

(1) Abode (*Āvāsa*)

An abode is unsuitable if while he lives in it, the unarisen sign does not arise in him or is lost when it arises, and where unestablished mindfulness fails to become established and the unconcentrated mind fails to become concentrated. In other words the five controlling facul-

ties (*Indriyas*) cannot be developed in an unsuitable abode.

An abode is suitable in which the unarisen sign arises and the arisen sign becomes confirmed, and in which mindfulness becomes established and the mind concentrated.

So if a monastery has many abodes, he can try them one by one, living in each for three days, and stay on where his mind becomes concentrated. The advantage of living in a suitable abode is that five hundred bhikkhus reached Arahantship while they dwelled in the lesser Nāga cave (*Cūḷanāga Leṇa*) in Sri Laṅkā after apprehending the meditation sign there.

(2) Alms-resort village (*Gocara Gāma*)

The village resort where alms are sought is suitable if it is not too far, being within the distance of a kosa and a half (2000 yards) either to the north or to the south so that one may not face the sun in going to the village, and is full of devotees offering food. So it is easy to get food there. The contrary is not suitable.

(3) Speech (*Bhassa*)

That speech is unsuitable which is classed among the thirty-two kinds of worldly or 'animal' talk such as speaking about food and drinks, clothes and fashions, flowers and perfumes, men and women, towns and villages, roads and vehicles, forests and mountains, rivers and oceans, rulers and battles, trades and business affairs.

That speech is suitable which is concerned with ungreediness, contentment, secluded living, the right effort, morality, concentration, wisdom, the four Noble Truths and emancipation from suffering. Even that one should talk in moderation.

(4) Person (*Puggala*)

That person who does not indulge in worldly talk, who speaks moderately about the Noble Practice, who is endowed with morality, concentration and wisdom, in whose company the unconcentrated mind is concentrated, or the concentrated mind becomes more steadfast, is suitable. But one who is devoted to the nourishment of his body and indulges in worldly talk is unsuitable; for he corrupts others as muddy water pollutes clean water.

(5) Food (*Bhojana*) and

(6) Climate (*Utu*)

For some, sweet food, for others, sour food is suitable. Similarly for some, a cool climate, for others a warm climate is suitable.

So when a meditator finds that by taking certain food or by living in a certain climate he is comfortable, and his unconcentrated mind becomes concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes firmer, then that food and that climate are suitable. Any other food or climate is unsuitable.

(7) Posture (*Iriyapatha*)

Walking suits one, standing or sitting or lying down another. So a meditator should try the postures, like the abode, for three days each. That posture is suitable to him

in which his uncontentrated mind becomes concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes more concentrated, or his concentrated mind becomes firmer. Any other posture should be regarded as unsuitable.

Thus he should avoid the seven unsuitable things and follow the seven suitable ones. For when he practises in this way, carefully guarding the counter sign, meditative absorption arises in a short time.

- **Practical Coupling of Bhāvanā with Nimitta**

The coupling of *bhāvanā* with *nimitta* will be illustrated by the meditation on pathavī-kasiṇa.

1 Parikamma-bhāvanā and Parikamma-nimitta

The meditator attentively looks at the earth disk with open eyes, reflecting mentally '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'. From this time onwards, the earth circle that he is looking at is called '*parikamma-nimitta*' (the preparatory sign), and the meditation that is being carried out is called '*parikamma-bhāvanā*' (the preparatory meditation).

2 Parikamma-bhāvanā and Uggaha-nimitta

After meditating for some time, perhaps weeks or months, the meditator will be able to close his eyes and visualize the meditation subject in his mind. This means that he can see the earth-disk vividly in his mind as he has seen it with open eyes even though the eyes are closed. This visualized subject or acquired sign is called '*uggaha-nimitta*'.

Although the meditation sign has changed, his *bhāvanā* does not change yet. At this stage he is meditating on *uggaha-nimitta* with *parikamma-bhāvanā*.

3 **Upacāra-bhāvanā and Paṭibhāga-nimitta**

From the time the acquired sign appears, it is no longer necessary to look at the original earth-disk unless his concentration disappears. By concentrating on the acquired sign, he keeps on meditating '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'

When his mental concentration reaches the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*), the acquired sign changes to the counter sign (*paṭibhāga-nimitta*). This change is very distinct and is easily noticed as the counter sign is very different from the acquired sign. The change is as distinct as taking out a looking glass from its leather case, or as a flock of cranes flying out of dark clouds.

The *parikamma-bhāvanā* is now raised to the level of *upacāra-bhāvanā*, the neighbourhood stage of meditation, with the counter sign as its object. The meditation is now at the stage of *upacāra bhāvanā* and *paṭibhāga-nimitta*.

At this stage all the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) are suppressed, and the five *jhāna*-factors become quite strong and function their duties efficiently. Therefore the mind is well fixed on the counter sign. For this reason, *upacāra-bhāvanā* is also called '*upacāra-jhāna*'.

4 Appanā-bhāvanā and Paṭibhāga-nimitta

Concentrating his mind on the counter sign, the meditator carries on his meditation, reflecting '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth'. When the counter sign is firm and immovable, it is made to expand by his will-power inch by inch until it fills every space in all directions.

Concentrating his mind on this new abstract image of *paṭibhāga-nimitta*, he keeps on meditating '*pathavī, pathavī*' or 'earth, earth' as before. If he is an intelligent, quick-witted person, he soon reaches *appanā-bhāvanā*, that is, meditative absorption, when the first *jhāna* arises. If he is a slow-witted person, he must try hard to maintain the counter sign with great care, and if he keeps on meditating vigilantly, he too will attain the first rūpāvacara *jhāna* sooner or later.

He is now at the stage of *appanā-bhāvanā* and *paṭibhāga-nimitta*. This means that the meditation subject of *appanā-bhāvanā* is also the counter sign of the earth-kasiṇa.

- **The Differences between *Upacāra-samādhi* and *Appanā-samādhi***

Upacāra-samādhi, the neighbourhood concentration, is the mental concentration associated with *upacāra-bhāvanā*. This *bhāvanā* is the meditation which has come to the neighbourhood of *jhānas*, *magga* or *phala*. In other words, *upacāra-bhāvanā* is the meditation which is about to enter the absorption-stage of meditation called *appanā-bhāvanā*.

Appanā-samādhi, the concentration at the meditative absorption, is the mental concentration associated with *appanā-bhāvanā* which is the stage of meditative absorption called *jhāna*, *magga* or *phala*.

The differences between *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi* will now be described.

1 In *upacāra-samādhi* the *jhāna*-factors are not yet fully developed whereas in *appanā-samādhi* the *jhāna*-factors are fully developed. Thus *appanā-samādhi* is stronger than *upacāra-samādhi*.

2 At the stage of *upacāra-samādhi*, *bhavaṅga cittas* (life-continuum) can still occur, and the meditator (*yogī*) can fall into the unconscious state. If this occurs, the *yogī* may think that everything has ceased as he is not conscious of anything and that he has attained *Nibbāna*. On the other hand, the *yogī* does not fall into the unconscious state at the stage of *appanā-bhāvanā*.

3 *Upacāra-samādhi* is unstable, and it may be compared to a child who has just learnt to walk. As the child may often fall down as he walks and has to struggle to get up again and again, so in the same way, when *upacāra-samādhi* is used as the basis of insight meditation, it often falls down to *parikamma samādhi*, and the *yogī* has to undertake *samatha-bhāvanā* again and again to raise the concentration to *upacāra-samādhi*.

On the other hand, the *appanā-samādhi* is stable, and it is compared to a man who can walk for hours without falling. When a *yogī* uses *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of insight-meditation, he can meditate for hours

without any danger of losing his concentration.

4 As the jhāna-factors are more developed in *appanā-samādhi* than in *upacāra-samādhi*, *appanā-samādhi* is associated with greater joy (*pīti*) and stronger bliss (*sukha*).

5 At both the stages of *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi*, the mind is free from all defilements (*pariyuṭṭhāna kilesās* and *vītikkaṃa kilesās*). So the meditator is said to attain the purity of mind (*citta-visuddhi*). Here again the defilements are subdued and suppressed with greater force in *appanā-samādhi* than in *upacāra-samādhi*, and the former is much more stable than the latter.

6 The mind associated with greater *samādhi* is more powerful and radiate brighter, stronger and more penetrative light. Consequently it is more effective in undertaking insight-meditation.

A yogī can undertake insight-meditation (*vipassanā*) using either *upacāra-samādhi* or *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of his meditation. If he uses *upacāra-samādhi* as the basis, his path to Nibbāna is called ***vipassanāyānika*** way, that is, using *vipassanā* as the carriage. If he uses *appanā-samādhi* as the basis of insight-meditation, his path to Nibbāna is called ***samathayānika*** way, that is, using *samatha* as the carriage. It is evident that *samathayānika* is more effective than *vipassanāyānika*.

- **Mastery of the First *Jhāna***

The *first rūpāvacara-jhāna* is associated with all the five *jhāna*-factors – viz., *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā*. As these factors are now fully developed, they are strong enough to keep the mind absorbed in the meditation subject automatically up to seven days if the *yogī* practises well.

Vitakka, the initial application of the mind, keeps on applying the mind in quick succession onto the meditation-subject, and *vicāra*, the sustained application, keeps the mind anchored on the subject. *Pīti*, the joy produced by the success of the mind to suppress the hindrances, refreshes the mind while *sukha* or bliss intensifies the mind for its success to drive away the hindrances. Now with the help of this successive application, this anchoring, this refreshing and this intensifying, *ekaggatā* unifies the mind with all its concomitants and evenly and rightly centres the mind on the meditation-subject.

Since these *jhāna*-factors have the ability to suppress and drive away all the five hindrances – viz., sense-desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and sceptical doubt – the mind is free from these hindrances as well as from other unwholesome elements. So quite secluded from sense desires, secluded from unprofitable things, the *yogī* or meditator enters upon and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by applied thought, sustained thought, joy and bliss born of seclusion. Hence it is said that “there is nothing of his whole body not permeated by the joy and bliss born of seclusion.”

A person who has attained the first jhāna should acquire mastery (*vasitā*) in five ways with respect to that jhāna.

- 1** *Āvajjana-vasitā* – mastery in adverting; it is the ability to discern the five jhāna factors wherever, whenever and for as long as he wishes.
- 2** *Samāpajjana-vasitā* – mastery in attaining; it is the ability to enter the jhāna quickly wherever and whenever he wishes.
- 3** *Adiṭṭhāna-vasitā* – mastery in resolving; it is the ability to remain in jhāna for as long a time as he has resolved to stay.
- 4** *Vuṭṭhāna-vasitā* – mastery in emerging; it is the ability to emerge from the jhāna at the time he has determined to emerge.
- 5** *Paccavekkhaṇa-vasitā* – mastery in reviewing; it is the ability to review the jhāna-factors quickly by reducing the number of life-continuum (*bhavaṅga-cittas*) between cognitive series of consciousness.

When he gains mastery in five ways as described above, he is said to attain mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna.

• **The Second *Rūpāvacara Jhāna***

When he has acquired mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna, then on emerging from the now familiar first jhāna, he can consider the faults in it. As he views the jhāna-factors with mindfulness and full awareness, initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) appear gross and weak while joy (*pīti*), bliss (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) appear peaceful to him.

So he reflects that the first jhāna is close to the enemies (hindrances) due to *vitakka* and *vicāra*, and it is less calm and less blissful than the second jhāna which has only three jhāna factors – *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā*.

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the first jhāna, brings to mind the counter sign of the earth-kasiṇa and reflect “*pathavī, pathavī*” repeatedly without allowing *vitakka* and *vicāra* to arise in his mind. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factors and obtaining the peaceful factors, knowing that “now the second jhāna will arise”.

He tries to develop the three stages of meditation in the normal order of *parikamma-bhāvanā*, *upacāra-bhāvanā*, *appanā-bhāvanā*. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the second rūpāvacara jhāna. When his mind remains fixed on the counter image for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the second jhāna which has only *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā* as its jhāna factors.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the second rūpāvacara jhāna.

• **The Third *Rūpāvacara Jhāna***

When he has acquired mastery in five ways with respect to the second *rūpāvacara jhāna*, then on emerging from the now familiar second jhāna, he can consider the flaws in it thus: “This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of *vitakka* and *vicāra*. Besides joy (*pīti*) is a form of mental excitement, so it appears to be gross and weak whereas bliss (*sukha*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) appear calm and peaceful. Because of *pīti*, the second jhāna is gross and weak and less calm and blissful than the third jhāna.”

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the second jhāna and reflects on the counter sign of the earth kasīṇa “*pathavī, pathavī*” as before, suppressing *pīti* from arising. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor and obtaining the peaceful factors, knowing that “now the third jhāna will arise.”

He tries to develop the three stages of meditation without letting *pīti* arise in the mind. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the third jhāna. When his mind remains focussed on the counter-image for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the third rūpāvacara jhāna which has only *sukha* and *ekaggatā* as its jhāna-factors.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this third jhāna. With the stilling or sur-

mounting of *vitakka*, *vicāra* and *pīti*. he dwells in bliss who has equanimity and is mindful. He is worthy of praise since he has reached the perfection of bliss.

• **The Fourth *Rūpāvacara Jhāna***

When he has acquired mastery in five ways with respect to the third jhāna, then on emerging from the now familiar third jhāna, he can consider the flaws in it thus: “This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of joy (*pīti*), and the mental concern about bliss (*sukha*) makes it gross and weak whereas equanimity as feeling (*upekkhā*) and one-pointedness (*ekaggatā*) appear calm and peaceful. Because of *sukha*, the third *jhāna* is gross and weak and less calm and less blissful than the fourth jhāna.”

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the third jhāna and reflects on the counter-sign of the earth *kaṣiṇa* ‘*pathavī, pathavī*’ as before, suppressing *sukha* from arising. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor and obtaining the peaceful factors, knowing that ‘now the fourth jhāna will arise.’ He tries to develop the three stages of meditation without letting *sukha* arise in the mind. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna*. When his mind remains focussed on the counter-sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the fourth jhāna which has only *upekkhā* and *ekaggatā* as its jhāna factors. With the abandoning of bodily pleasure and bodily pain and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief he enters upon and dwells in the fourth jhāna with equanimity.

He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways

with respect to the fourth jhāna. With the stilling of gross jhāna-factors the fourth jhāna is so subtle that the breathing of the meditator dwelling in the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna is no longer noticeable.

- **The Fivefold *Rūpāvacara Jhāna***

There are two ways of developing rūpāvacara jhānas: the fourfold method and the fivefold method. The above description shows the fourfold method which is the more common one.

But for persons of slow wisdom, after attaining the first jhāna, they cannot eliminate *vitakka* and *vicāra* simultaneously to develop the second jhāna. They have to eliminate the jhāna factors one by one in going up to higher jhānas. Thus, for this type of person, there are five rūpāvacara jhānas.

When a person is developing fivefold jhāna, on emerging from the now familiar first jhāna, he can consider the flaws in it in this way: ‘This jhāna is threatened by the nearness of the hindrances, and its factors are weakened by the grossness of initial application (*vitakka*). Consequently the first jhāna is less calm and less blissful than the second jhāna which has *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha* and *ekaggatā* as its jhāna-factors.

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the first jhāna, brings to mind the counter-sign of the earth-kasiṅa and reflects ‘*pathavī, pathavī*’ repeatedly without *vitakka*. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor (*vitakka*) and obtaining the remaining peaceful jhāna-factors, knowing that ‘now the second jhāna will arise.’

He tries to develop the three stages of meditation without allowing *vitakka* to arise in the mind. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the second *jhāna*. When his mind remains fixed on the counter-sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the second *jhāna* with *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā* as its *jhāna* factors. He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this *jhāna*.

On emerging from the now familiar second *jhāna*, he can consider the flaws in it in this way: ‘This *jhāna* is threatened by the nearness of *vitakka*, and its factors are weakened by the grossness of sustained application (*vicāra*). Consequently the second *jhāna* is less calm and less blissful than the third *jhāna* which does not have *vicāra*.

Thus he cuts off his attachment to the second *jhāna*, brings to mind the counter-sign of the earth-*kisīṇa* and reflects ‘*pathavī, pathavī*’ repeatedly without *vitakka* and *vicāra*. He does so with the purpose of abandoning the gross factor (*vicāra*) and obtaining the remaining peaceful *jhāna*-factors, knowing that ‘now the third *jhāna* will arise.’ He tries to develop the three stages of meditation without allowing *vitakka* and *vicāra* to arise in the mind. The culmination of this meditation is the attainment of the third *jhāna*.

When his mind remains well focussed on the counter-sign for one hour, two hours or more, he attains the third *jhāna* with *pīti*, *sukha*, and *ekaggatā* as its *jhāna*

factors. He then practises to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

The fivefold third jhāna is identical with the fourfold second jhāna.

**Table 2. Dual Method of Counting
Rūpāvacara Jhānas**

Jhāna-factors	Fivefold method	Fourfold method	Rūpa-plane of birth
<i>Vitak, Vicāra, Pīi, Sukha, Ekaggatā</i>	<i>first jhāna</i>	<i>first jhāna</i>	<i>first jhāna plane</i>
<i>Vicāra, Pīi, Sukha, Ekaggatā</i>	<i>second jhāna</i>	-	-
<i>Pīi, Sukha, Ekaggā</i>	<i>third jhāna</i>	<i>second jhāna</i>	<i>second jhāna plane</i>
<i>Sukha, Ekaggatā</i>	<i>fourth jhāna</i>	<i>third jhāna</i>	<i>third jhāna plane</i>
<i>Upekkha, Ekaggatā</i>	<i>fifth jhāna</i>	<i>fourth jhāna</i>	<i>fourth jhāna plane</i>

According to the investigation conducted at the International Buddha Sāsana Meditation Centres in Myanmar, all meditators who attained the first rūpāvacara jhāna could eliminate vitakka and vicāra simultaneously in developing the second rūpāvacara jhāna.

So the fourfold method of counting rūpāvacara jhānas is the more common one, and consequently, the rūpāvacara planes, where the meditators are reborn after they have developed and maintained the respective jhānas till their death, are named in accordance with the fourfold method.

References:

- 1 "Visuddhi Magga" by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol.1, pp. 237-323.

- 2 “*The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*” by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, pp. 122-176.
- 3 “*The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)*” by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Pe Maung Tin, pp. 138-195.
- 4 “*The Essence of Buddha Abhidhamma*” by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon, Yadanar Min Literature, 1995, pp. 356-385.

Review Questions

- 1 How will you make an earth-kasiṇa and use it to develop the first rūpāvacara jhāna?
- 2 What are the enemies (*nīvaraṇas*) that you will encounter in meditation? What are the powers (*balas*) that you can rely on to combat the enemies?
- 3 What causes the mind to be distracted and flitting about from one sense-object to another? How can it be tamed and calmed down?
- 4 Describe the essential qualities (*padhāniyaṅga*) that a meditator should possess.
- 5 What is jhāna? How can you develop the jhāna-factors to attain the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*?
- 6 Describe the three stages of meditation and the mental concentration associated with each stage.
- 7 Describe the three types of meditation signs (*nimittas*). What are the differences between the

- acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) and the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*)?
- 8 Describe the three types of concentration (*samādhi*) that associate with the three stages of meditation.
 - 9 What are the differences between *upacāra-samādhi* and *appanā-samādhi*? Which is better to be used in insight-meditation?
 - 10 Describe the successive stages of development in the meditation on an earth-kasiṇa by coupling *bhāvanā* with *nimitta*.
 - 11 How can a meditator develop the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*)? How can he know that he has attained it?
 - 12 How can you develop your concentration to the first *jhāna* by meditating on an earth-kasiṇa?
 - 13 How can you acquire mastery (*vasitā*) in five ways with respect to the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*?
 - 14 After attaining the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*, how can you develop the second and the third *rūpāvacara jhānas*?
 - 15 How can you develop fourfold *rūpāvacara jhānas* by undertaking meditation on an earth-kasiṇa?
 - 16 Describe the dual method of counting *rūpāvacara jhānas*. Which is the more common one?

CHAPTER VI
MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING
(*Ānāpānassati*)

The Praise of the Buddha

Ānāpānassati is included in the ten Recollections (*Anussatis*). It is not at all an insignificant subject of meditation. It is indeed a very important subject of meditation which is constantly used by noble men (*mahāpurisas*) like the Buddhas, the Paccekabuddhas and the disciples of the Buddha known as the Buddha's sons. If it is practised properly it is both peaceful and sublime. It demands strong mindfulness and wisdom. *(Visuddhi.i, 276)*

“It has been praised and recommended by the Blessed One thus: “And bhikkhus, this concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and practised much, is both peaceful and sublime. Nothing need be added to it. It is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise.

*“O bhikkhus, just as dust particles which have arisen in the last summer month are immediately pacified and calmed down by unseasonal torrential rain, so in the same way a restless mind is immediately calmed down by the practice of *Ānāpānassati*. This concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when*

developed and practised much, is both peaceful and sublime. Nothing need be added to it. It is an unadulterated blissful abiding, and it banishes at once and stills evil unprofitable thoughts as soon as they arise.” (S.iii, 279-280)

Ānāpānassati is one of the most effective meditation-subjects for developing concentration quickly. It is suitable to many meditators and used in many meditation centres as the basic *parihāriya-kammaṭṭhāna*, that is, the special meditation subject for developing concentration. If properly practised, it can develop the mind up to the *fourth rūpāvacara jhāna* in *catukka* method.

• Textual Description

“O bhikkhus, in this dispensation, a bhikkhu who undertakes meditation goes to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to a quiet place, sits down, folds his legs cross-wise, sets his body erect and establishes mindfulness on the in-going breath and the out-going breath which represent the meditation subject of the mindfulness of breathing. Ever mindfully he breathes in, and ever mindfully he breathes out.

“(i) Breathing in long, he knows ‘I breathe in long’; or breathing out long, he knows ‘I breathe out long.’

“(ii) Breathing in short, he knows ‘I breathe in short’; or breathing out short, he knows ‘I breathe out short.’

“(iii) He strives on thus ‘I shall breathe in to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly’; he strives on thus ‘I shall breathe out to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly.’

“(iv) He strives on thus ‘I shall breathe in tranquillizing the bodily formation of the in-going breath’; he strives on thus ‘I shall breathe out tranquillizing the bodily formation of the out-going breath.’ (S.v, 321-2)

- **Practical Instruction**

The meditator should learn the subject of meditation from a competent teacher. Then he should find a secluded, quiet place suitable for meditation, taking notice that any noise is a serious disturbance to the mindfulness of breathing. In a group meditation each meditator should maintain complete silence.

The meditator should sit comfortably either cross-legged or in any preferable posture on a mat or seat. He should keep his body and head erect while relaxing all his muscles. He should not move any part of his body during meditation, although he is allowed to change his posture to relieve any unbearable pain in his body. Even then he must tolerate any bodily pain or discomfort as much as possible and change his posture gently with half awareness if he has to, still mindful of breathing while he does so.

He should place his hands on his thighs or legs, preferably with the right hand on the left hand with palms

turning upward. He closes his eyes and breathes normally. He should take note where the breath touches. For a person of long nose it may touch under the tip of the nose. If the nose is of normal length, the breath may touch at the two nostrils when he is breathing with both nostrils or at one nostril when he is breathing only with that nostril. For a person of short nose, the touch may be distinct at the upper lip.

Wherever is the touch most distinct, he keeps his mind or attention at the point of contact, and try to be aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by their gentle brushing at the touch point.

The First Step : Awareness of the In-breath and the Out-breath

The first important step in mindfulness of breathing is to be constantly aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath by their gentle brushing either at the nostrils or at the upper lip.

Only if the meditator practises ānāpānassati by establishing his mindfulness on the breath at the point of distinct contact with the in-breath and the out-breath, will the ānāpānassati concentration and meditation be fully accomplished in him. (Visuddhi. i, 271)

If the in-going breath and the out-going breath are not distinct, the meditator may breathe a little harder or deeper to make them distinct. Once he is aware of them, he should breathe on normally.

Now an important question arises – should one concentrate on the breath or on the touch? The answer is: one must always concentrate on the breath. *Ānāpānassati* means mindfulness of the in-breath and the out-breath. If one concentrates on the touch, he is no longer doing *ānāpānassati*, but another *kammaṭṭhāna*.

Moreover, he should not pay attention to natural characteristics (*sabhāva lakkhaṇas*) and common characteristics (*sāmañña lakkhaṇas*).

Sabhāva lakkhaṇas – natural characteristics of *pathavī, āpo, tejo* and *vāyo* such as hardness, cohesiveness, hotness, pushing and supporting characteristics.

Sāmañña lakkhaṇas – common characteristics of *nāma-rūpa*, viz., impermanence (*anicca*), suffering (*dukkha*), and not-self (*anatta*).

Thus he should not take note as ‘in, out, touching’, or ‘in, out, pushing’ or ‘in, out, *anicca*’ or ‘in, out, *dukkha*’, etc.

Also one need not label the breath as ‘in-breath, out-breath’ or ‘in, out’. All that is required is to be mindfully aware of the in-going breath and the out-going breath all the time. If he cannot concentrate his mind without labelling, then he may note ‘in-breath, out-breath’ at the beginning stage.

Another important requirement is to focus the mind on the breath at the point of contact only, and not to follow the breath as it goes into the nostrils or as it goes out of the nostrils. If he follows the breath, his mind will not be at the state of one-pointedness, and consequently his progress in developing concentration will be delayed.

For the same reason he should not take note of any bodily sensation such as pain, itch, or numbness that arises during meditation. Since the mind can be aware of only one thing at a time, the meditator will not be aware of anything else if he can focus his mind well on the meditation subject. The awareness of any other thing shows that the mind has been distracted towards that thing.

Any bodily pain or discomfort should not be a bother to the meditator. He should tolerate it, and neglect it. It should be a warning to him to increase his mindfulness of the meditation subject. When he can concentrate his mind well on the meditation subject, he will no longer notice the pain. Even if the pain becomes unbearable, he can change his posture to relieve the pain.

He must keep his mind constantly focussed on the in-breath and the out-breath without allowing the mind to wander out to other sense objects. In case it has wandered out, he must bring it back to the meditation subject as soon as he notices it.

The Buddha has warned us that it is very difficult to control the mind for it is very subtle and very fast, and the hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) are out there to agitate and distract it. But we should exert all our effort to control and culture it, because, once cultured, it will bring about human happiness, celestial happiness and even Nibbanic happiness.

So he is culturing and developing his mind while he keeps it focussed on the in-breath and the out-breath

at the point of contact with either the nostrils or the upper lip. He strives to keep his meditating mind fixed calmly on the breath for half an hour, one hour, etc. If the meditating mind always remains fixed at the in-breath and the out-breath for about an hour at every sitting for meditation, he can proceed to the second step, that is, noting the length of breath as long or short.

In case the meditating mind does not remain fixed calmly on the object of the in-breath and the out-breath and is very restless, the Counting Method should be used as directed in Great Commentaries.

- **The Counting Method**

The meditator should count his breath as follows.

1. 'In-breath, out-breath' — one,
2. 'In-breath, out-breath' — two,
3. 'In-breath, out-breath' — three,
4. 'In-breath, out-breath' — four,
5. 'In-breath, out-breath' — five,
6. 'In-breath, out-breath' — six,
7. 'In-breath, out-breath' — seven,
8. 'In-breath, out-breath' — eight.

He may count not less than five and not more than ten. But he is advised to count up to eight in reverence to the Noble Eightfold Path which he is trying to develop. He should make a determination to keep his mind calmly fixed on the in-breath and the out-breath while counting from one to eight without letting the mind to wander away towards various external objects.

As he reflects on the breath by counting, his meditative mind will gradually remain fixed calmly on the object of the in-breath and the out-breath by the power of the counting method. When the mind remains calmly fixed on the meditation subject for about half an hour to one hour at every sitting, he can stop counting and continue to be aware of the breath. He should also make the resolution: “May my mind remain calmly fixed on the meditation subject for half an hour or one hour”, and meditate. If he is successful at every sitting, he can change the meditation method to the observation of the length of breath.

The Second Step : Awareness of the Length of Breath

‘Breathing in long’, he knows distinctly, ‘I breathe in long’; ‘breathing out long’, he knows distinctly. ‘I breathe out long.’

‘Breathing in short’, he knows distinctly. ‘I breathe in short’; ‘breathing out short’, he knows distinctly, ‘I breathe out short’.

So did the Buddha give the instruction. What is meant by a long and short breath here? It means the duration of time taken by the breath. If it takes a long time to breathe in or out, then the breath is taken to be long. If it takes a short time to breathe in or out, then the breath is taken to be short. So the length of breath is arbitrarily determined by the meditator himself.

The meditator should always breathe normally. He should not intentionally make the breath either long or short. Neither should he investigate how long or how

short the breath is. If he does so, he will jeopardize or upset his concentration.

Sometimes the length of breath remains long for the whole sitting or short for the whole sitting. But generally the length of breath changes from time to time during the meditation. Whatever the length of breath may be, the in-breath and the out-breath should be equal in length. This will greatly help the development of mental concentration.

If the in-going breath is long and the out-going breath is short for a long time, the meditator may fall backward. If, on the other hand, the in-going breath is short and the out-going breath is long for some time, his body will bend forward. So the in-breath and the out-breath should be equal in length. But the meditator should always breathe calmly and normally.

The meditator should not label the breath as long or short. He should go on concentrating his mind on the in-breath and the out-breath either by the counting method or without counting. When the mind remains calmly focussed on the breath, he just takes note of the breath as long or short while he is mindfully conscious of the in-breath and the out-breath.

The meditator should strive on so that he can focus the mind calmly on the long or short breath for one hour, two hours, and so on. At this stage the meditation sign (nimitta) should appear. Whether it appears or not, the meditator should proceed to the next step.

The Third Step : Awareness of the Whole Breath

He trains thus “I shall breathe in to know clearly the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole in-breath.”

He trains thus “I shall breath out to know clearly the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole out-breath.”
(Ma. i, 70)

When the meditator is calmly and firmly conscious of the length of the breath as long or short for one hour or two hours at every sitting, then he should proceed to the next step as instructed above by the Buddha. He should strive on to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath clearly.

First, he should mindfully focus on the in-breath and the out-breath. Next, he ardently tries to be aware of the length of the breath as long or short. When he can steadfastly focus his attention on the length of the breath, he strives on to be mindfully aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

While he does so, he should not try to note thus: ‘This is the beginning, this is the middle, this is the end.’ Neither should he label ‘beginning, middle, end.’ If he tries to do so, he may jeopardize his concentration. If he cannot meditate without labelling, then he should just label as ‘in-breath, out-breath’ or ‘breathing in, breathing out.’

All he need to do is to be mindfully aware of the whole breath from the beginning to the end by its touch at the tip of the nose or at the nostrils or on the upper lip.

He should not follow the breath as it goes into the body or out of the body. He should not take the breath that touches the nostrils as the beginning, the breath that reaches the chest as the middle, and that which arrives at the navel as the end when he breathes in.

Similarly, when he breathes out, he should not regard the navel, the chest and the nostrils as the points to mark the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath. He must focus his mind only on the breath that is touching or brushing the tip of the nose, the nostrils or the upper lip, thus keeping his mind at one point, that is, the point of contact.

- **The Comparison with a Gate-keeper and a Sawyer**

The meditator should note the simile of a gate-keeper. A gate-keeper does not examine people inside and outside the town for they are not his concern. But he does examine each man as he arrives at the gate.

Similarly the meditator pays no attention to the in-going breath that has gone inside the nose and to the out-going breath that has gone outside the nose, because they are not his concern. But they are his concern each time they arrive at the nostril gate.

He should also act like a sawyer in the simile of the saw. Suppose a man is cutting a log with a saw. The man's mindfulness is established at the saw's teeth where they cut the log, without his giving attention to the saw's

teeth as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so. In other words, he focusses his attention only on the teeth of the saw that cut the log; his eyes do not follow the saw as it moves forward and backward.

Yet he knows from the teeth of the saw that cut the log whether the saw is moving forward or backward and whether it moves through a long distance or a short distance. Moreover he also knows the beginning, the middle, and the end of the saw-teeth that have cut through the log.

Similarly the meditator establishes mindfulness at the nose tip or the upper lip, without giving attention to the inbreaths and the outbreaths as they approach and recede, though they are not unknown to him as they do so. By focussing his attention on the breath at the point of contact, he is aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the in-going breath as well as the out-going breath.

When the meditator can calmly and mindfully focus his mind on the beginning, the middle, and the end of the in-breath and the out-breath for one hour, two hours or more at every sitting, the meditation sign (*nimitta*) may appear. Whether it appears or not, he should proceed to the next stage.

The Fourth Step : the Disappearance of the Breath

Whenever the meditator sits for meditation, he should first establish mindfulness on the in-going breath and the out-going breath. When his mindfulness is well

established, he should try to be aware of the length of the breath and take notice whether it is long or short by noting whether the breathing is fast or slow. When he can calmly and mindfully concentrate his mind on the length of breath, he should strive on to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

As he mindfully watches the in-going breath and the out-going breath to be aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath, his breathing becomes more and more gentle and subtle. The gross in-breaths and out-breaths gradually cease, and his consciousness arises with the subtle in-breath and out-breath as its object. And when that has ceased, it goes on arising with the successively subtler breaths as its object. How?

Suppose a man strikes a **bronze bell** with a big iron bar. Immediately a loud sound arises, and his consciousness will arise with the gross sound as its object. Then when the gross sound has ceased, his consciousness will arise with the subtle sound as its object. And when that has ceased, his consciousness will go on arising with the successively subtler sound as its object. This is how it should be understood. For while other meditation subjects become clearer at each higher stage, *ānāpānassati* does not. In fact, as he goes on developing it, it becomes more subtle for him at higher stage, and it even comes to the point at which it is no longer manifest or distinct.

However, when it becomes unmanifest in this way, the meditator should not get up from his seat, shake out his leather mat, and go away. What should be done? He should not get up with the idea ‘Shall I ask the teacher?’

or ‘Is my meditation subject lost?’ If he goes away, and so disturbs his posture, the meditation subject has to be started anew. So he should go on sitting as he was and temporarily substitutes the place where the breaths normally touched for the actual breaths as the object of contemplation.

If the breaths do not become subtle even when he concentrates his mind on the whole breath clearly being aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the breath for one hour or more at every sitting, he should make a mental wish “May my gross breath be calm”, and strive on to be mindfully aware of the beginning, the middle, and the end of the whole breath.

Gradually the breath will become smooth, subtle and calm by itself. He should not purposely make the breath calm and subtle, he will slowly gasp for air and become tired. He will jeopardize his concentration.

If the breath becomes subtle by itself and the mind is calm on it, most meditators, by the power of meditation, are no longer aware of the head, the nose and the body; there exist only the breath and the mind which is conscious of the breath. At that moment “I” or “he” cannot be found.

The meditator should strive on to be calmly and mindfully aware of the breath with the intention “May my breath be calm and subtle.” When his concentration rises, his breath usually becomes calm and subtle.

Then he will need more powerful mindfulness to concentrate his mind on that subtle breath very atten-

tively. At this stage very powerful mindfulness that fixes the mind on the meditation subject and very powerful wisdom that clearly apprehends the subtle breath are very essential.

While he is striving so, sometimes the in-breaths and the out-breaths are no longer distinct. He can no longer find the breath which seems to disappear. In that case, he should fix his mind at the place where he has apprehended the breath, bearing in mind that he is breathing.

- **The Simile of a Farmer**

A farmer, after doing some ploughing, sent his oxen free to graze and sat down to rest in the shade. Then his oxen would soon go to the forest. After some time when he wants to catch them and yoke them again, he does not wander through the forest following their tracks, but rather he takes his rope and goad and goes straight to the drinking place where they usually met. He just sat and lied there.

After the oxen had wandered about for a part of the day, they came to the drinking place. They drank and bathed, and when they came out and were standing about, he secured them with the rope, brought them back by prodding them with the goad, yoked them and went on with his ploughing.

So too, the meditator should not look for the in-breaths and the out-breaths anywhere else than the place normally touched by them. He should take the rope of mindfulness and the goad of understanding, and fixing his mind on the place normally touched by them he should

go on giving his attention to that.

As he gives his attention in this way the breaths reappear after no long time, as the oxen did at the drinking place. So he can secure them with the rope of mindfulness, and yoking them in that same place and prodding them with the goad of understanding, he can keep on applying himself to the meditation object.

- **The Appearance of the Meditation Sign**
(*Bhāvanā Nimitta*)

In mindfulness of breathing, all the three types of meditation image or sign – viz., preparatory image (*parikamma nimitta*), acquired image (*uggaha nimitta*) and counter image (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) are attainable.

The natural in-going breath and out-going breath are taken as the preparatory image. The grey dirty image that appears at a certain degree of mental concentration is also regarded as the preparatory image.

A white image like cotton or silk cotton that appears at a higher degree of concentration is called the acquired image. This is a general description. The image of other colours or shapes may also appear. Different images may appear to different people.

As the concentration rises, the image or sign may become very clear and bright like the evening star. This image is taken to be the counter sign. Again this is a general description.

It is described in *Visuddhi Magga* that the meditation image is not the same for all. It appears to some producing a soft touch like cotton wool, silk cotton or a breeze. To some the image appears like a star, a ball of ruby or a ball of pearl; to some it has a harsh touch like a cotton seed, or a pin made of heartwood; to some it is like a long string, or a wreath of flowers, or a crest of smoke; to others it is like a spread out cobweb, a film of cloud, a lotus flower, a chariot-wheel, the disc of the moon or the disc of the sun.

In fact that resembles an occasion when a number of *bhikkhus* are sitting together and reciting a *Suttanta*. One of them asks, “Like what does the *Suttanta* appear to you?” and one answers, “To me it appears like a great mountain torrent.” Another “To me it is like a row of forest trees”, and still another, “To me it is like a fruit-bearing tree, complete with foliage, giving cool shade.”

So, as one *Sutta* appears differently to them, owing to the difference in perception, this one subject of meditation appears differently due to the difference in perception, for it is born of perception, originated by perception, sprung from perception. Therefore it should be understood that when it appears differently it is because of the difference in perception.

For a person who had experience in *Ānāpānassati* in a previous life, the meditation image starts to appear while he is meditating to be aware of the length of breath or while he is focussing on the whole breath or while he is meditating on very subtle breath. But this initial image

is not stable and firm yet. So the meditator should ignore it and keep on focussing on the in-going breath and the out-going breath. By doing so the image will become more stable.

For most people the image appears while the meditator is focussing on the mild subtle breath which reappears after it has gone to be no longer distinct. Again this image is usually not stable yet. The meditator should not pay attention to it; he should strive on to be mindful of the breath. When the image and the breath become identical and indivisible, he is aware of the image while he is trying to be aware of the breath and vice versa. This is the right form.

However, for some meditators the image does not appear at the place where the breath touches the nostrils or the upper lip. It appears a little further apart or about one foot from the tip of the nose. It may also appear on the forehead or in other places.

In this case the meditator should not pay attention to the image or sign. He should focus his attention on the breath at the point of contact. When his concentration attains full strength, the image will appear at the point of contact and become indivisible from the breath.

And here, the consciousness that has the in-breath as its object is one, the consciousness that has the out-breath as its object is another, and the consciousness that has the image as its object is still another. For the meditation subject reaches neither absorption nor even

access in one who has not got these three things clear. But it reaches access and also absorption in one who has got them clear.

And when the image appears in this way, the meditator should inform the teacher, who in turn should encourage the yogī and give proper guidance.

After this the meditator should fix his mind on the image; and so from now on his development proceeds by way of fixing. He should put away extraneous aspects, and anchor his mind upon the in-going breath and the out-going breath.

From the time the counter image appears, his hindrances are suppressed, his defilements subside, his mindfulness is established and his mind is concentrated in access concentration.

He should not give attention to the image for its colour, nor reflect upon it for its characteristics. He should guard it as carefully as a king's chief queen guards the embryo of a universal monarch, or as a farmer guards the ripening crops.

He should avoid the seven unsuitable things and cultivate the seven suitable things. Then, guarding it thus, he should make it grow and improve with repeated attention. He should also practise the tenfold skill in absorption and bring about evenness of energy with concentration.

As he strives thus the first *rūpāvacara kusala*

jhāna will arise in due course. Then after acquiring mastery in five ways with respect to the first *jhāna*, he can go on developing the fourfold or fivefold higher *jhānas* on that same counter image in the same way as described under the earth-kasina.

- **The Benefits of Ānāpānassati**

The mindfulness of breathing is of great fruit, of great benefit. The great fruit is the attainment of the fourth rūpāvacara *jhāna*. The great benefit should be understood here as peacefulness both because of the words ‘And, *bhikkhus*, this concentration through mindfulness of breathing, when developed and much practised, is both peaceful and sublime’ (*S.v. 321*), and because of its ability to cut off the initial application (*vitakka*).

Because it is peaceful and sublime and an unadulterated blissful abiding, it cuts off the mind’s running hither and thither with the initial application obstructive to concentration, and keeps the mind only on the breaths as its object. Hence it is said, ‘Mindfulness of breathing should be developed in order to cut off the initial application’ (*A.iv. 353*).

Also the great benefit of mindfulness of breathing should be understood as the root condition for perfecting clear vision and deliverance for this has been said by the Blessed One:

“Bhikkhus, the mindfulness of breathing, when developed and much practised, perfects the four foundations of mindfulness.

The four foundations of mindfulness, when developed and much practised, perfect the seven enlightenment factors. The seven enlightenment factors, when developed and much practised, perfect clear vision and deliverance. " (M. iii, 82)

References:

- 1 *"Visuddhi Magga"* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated into Myanmar by Ven. Nandamālā, Vol. I, pp. 552-585.
- 2 *"The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)"* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, pp. 285-317.
- 3 *"The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)"* by Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa, translated by Pe Maung Tin, pp. 305-337.

Review Questions

- 1 How should we exercise mindfulness of breathing according to the instructions of the Buddha?
- 2 Describe the four steps in the practice of mindfulness of breathing. What should we do when the breath disappears?
- 3 How should we conduct ānāpānassati properly to reach the first rūpāvacara jhāna?

- 4 How does the meditation sign (*bhāvanā nimitta*) appear normally in *ānāpānassati*? What is the difference between the acquired sign and the counter sign?
- 5 In practising *ānāpānassati* how do we know that we have reached the first absorption? How can we go on to attain the fourth *rūpāvacara jhāna*?
- 6 Why is *ānāpānassati* practised in many meditation centres? What are the benefits of *ānāpānassati*?
- 7 What will happen if we do not follow the instructions of the Buddha in practising ‘*Ānāpānassati*’?
- 8 Have you practised ‘*Ānāpānassati*’? What are the difficulties that you have encountered?
- 9 Describe the three stages of meditation in *Ānāpānassati* and the meditation signs that indicate these stages.
- 10 How did the Buddha praise *Ānāpānassati*? Why is it the staple meditation subject for Bodhisattas?

CHAPTER VII
FOUR GUARDIAN MEDITATIONS
(Caturāraḅkha Kammatṭhānas)

**To Protect Oneself from Internal and External
Dangers**

‘*Caturāraḅkha kammatṭhānas*’ means ‘four guardian meditation subjects’. They are used to protect oneself from internal and external dangers.

The internal dangers are the five hindrances (*nīvaraṇas*) and other defilements (*kilesās*) that arise together with the mind, and defile and taint the mind to be unwholesome and uncultured. The five hindrances are our closest enemies which prevent us from performing meritorious deeds, and obstruct the arising of moral consciousness, jhāna and magga in our meditation.

The external dangers come from wicked persons, dangerous animals like tigers, wolves, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and ghosts, ogres, ogresses, etc. One may encounter these dangers especially when one meditates alone in the forest.

To ward off these dangers, one should first undertake the guardian meditations at least for a few minutes before one practises the special meditation subject (*parihāriya kammatṭhāna*) for developing concentration.

The four guardian meditation subjects are:

- 1 *Mettā bhāvanā* – radiating loving kindness.
- 2 *Buddhānussati* – reflecting on the attributes of the Buddha.

- 3 *Asubha bhāvanā* – reflecting on the repulsiveness of a corpse, and
 4 *Māraṇānussati* – reflecting on the nature of death.

These four meditation subjects serve as ‘*sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas*’, that is, meditation subjects generally desirable in all matters.

Before a bhikkhu residing in a monastery takes up his special meditation subject, he should first develop loving-kindness towards all bhikkhus in the monastery and then to the community of bhikkhus. He should sincerely radiate loving kindness thus:

‘May all be free from danger;
 May they be free from mental suffering;
 May they be free from bodily pain;
 May they be healthy and happy always.’

Then he should radiate loving-kindness to all deities, to the rulers of the village of his alms resort, to all human beings in the village, and to all living beings in general.

By radiating loving-kindness in this way he produces kindness in his co-residents; so they are easy for him to live with. Kindly deities will protect him, and the village-rulers will protect his requisites. He is loved by men and deities alike. So he can go among the villagers without incurring their dislike since they trust him. With loving-kindness to all living beings he can wander unhindered everywhere.

Besides his mind is calm, tranquil, and joyful while his countenance is clear, serene, and pleasant. Since he wins the love of everybody, no one will try to cause him harm.

Then he should reflect on the attributes of the Buddha very respectfully. By doing so he is permeating his mind and body with the noble attributes. Thus his body will become as sacred as the special fragrance chamber of the Buddha. So his enemies, wild animals and ghosts will not do harm to him. Moreover, *Buddhānussati* will strengthen his faith and confidence in the Buddha as well as his mindfulness and wisdom.

Furthermore, he should also practise *asubha bhāvanā* by reflecting on the repulsiveness of a corpse. This will subdue his lust and sever his attachment to his body as well as to other people's bodies. When he is well established in the perception of loathsomeness, even divine objects cannot tempt his mind to greed.

Finally but not last, he should practise *maranānussati* by reflecting on the nature of death. He should reflect in this way: 'My being alive is uncertain, but my death is certain'. The perception of death will subdue his pride, greed and anger. It will help him to give up improper search and to live without attachment with a growing sense of urgency.

Moreover, a meditator or yogī should always practise the four guardian meditations while he is performing his daily duties. As soon as he wakes up in the morning, he should reflect '*arahaṃ, arahaṃ*', contem-

plating the noble attribute of the Buddha.

When he washes his face, and the face is in contact with cool water, he should contemplate: ‘May all beings be cool, calm, and pleasant as this cool, clear water.’

While he brushes his teeth, washes his mouth, takes a bath, defecates and urinates, he should contemplate on the repulsiveness of the body.

When he goes to bed, he contemplates thus: ‘A day has passed by, I am coming closer to death by one more day. My being alive is uncertain, and my death is certain’.

If he always practises the four guardian meditations daily at appropriate times, he will ward off all dangers, materialize his good wishes, and develop his five powers or controlling faculties – viz., faith, effort, mindfulness, concentration or one-pointedness of the mind, and wisdom. This will enhance his ability to undertake his special meditation effectively.

Now *Buddhānussati* and *Maraṇānussati*, if undertaken correctly, will lead to the access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*) whereas *asubha bhāvanā* will lead to the first jhāna.

Mettā bhāvanā, again if practised correctly, will lead to the third rūpāvacara jhāna in the fourfold jhāna method, or to the fourth rūpāvacara jhāna in the fivefold jhāna method. All these mental concentrations can be

used as the basis for proceeding to insight meditation (*vipassanā bhāvanā*).

Thus the four guardian meditations, when developed fully, will be very beneficial and very effective for warding off all dangers, for protecting oneself and for developing the sterling qualities in oneself. So the essential instruction will be given for developing each guardian meditation to the fullest extent.

Developing Loving-kindness

(*Mettā Bhāvanā*)

Loving-kindness is included in the four divine abidings (*Brahma Vihāra*). A meditator who wants to develop loving-kindness, if he is a beginner, should sever the major and minor impediments and learn the meditation subject from a qualified teacher.

Then, when he has done the work connected with the meal and got rid of any drowsiness due to eating, he should seat himself comfortably on a well-prepared seat in a secluded place.

To start with, he should review the evils of hate and the advantages of forbearance. Why? Because hate has to be abandoned and forbearance acquired in the development of this meditation subject.

But he is not able to put away any unseen evil or to acquire any unknown advantage; therefore the evils of hate should be considered through such Suttas as:

*“No higher rule, the Buddhas say, than
patience,
And no Nibbāna higher than forbearance.”*
(D. ii, 49; Dh. 184)

*“Him I call a brahman who is strong in
forbearance, who makes an army of it.”*
(Dh. 399)

*“ Angerless does he endure abuse,
beating and imprisonment,
patience his power and armed might –
that one I call a Brahmana.”* (Dh. 399)

“ No greater thing exists than forbearance.”
(S. i, 222)

Hate, hatred or anger stands for the immoral mental factor ‘*dosa*’, which is the most destructive element in the world. Before it destroys others, it will destroy one first. As soon as hate arises in the mind, anger-rooted consciousness occurs in association with ignorance, moral shamelessness, moral fearlessness and restlessness of the mind. So one becomes distracted, loses one’s sense of judgement, being ready to perform immoral actions at any time.

Anger-rooted consciousness is also accompanied with painful mental feeling which agitates the mind. Anger or hate will also give rise to sorrow, grief, lamentation and despair. It is the direct enemy of loving-kindness. If anger or hate is present in the mind, loving-

kindness cannot arise. So if we want to develop loving-kindness, hate must be driven away.

Loving-kindness and forbearance are the two qualities of the same beautiful mental factor called '*adosa*', which is the direct opposite of '*dosa*'. So by cultivating forbearance, anger or hate can be suppressed and loving-kindness can be developed. So the Buddha admired forbearance as the most noble austere practice.

To whom loving-kindness should not be cultivated first

Loving-kindness should not be developed first towards the following persons.

- 1 Persons one does not hold dear,
- 2 Very dear friends,
- 3 Neutral persons,
- 4 Enemies,
- 5 Persons of the opposite sex,
- 6 Dead persons.

The persons one does not hold dear are the ones who do not act for one's welfare but act for the welfare of one's enemies. To develop loving-kindness towards such a person means to put an unloved person in the place of a dear one. So this will make one tired.

Again to develop loving-kindness towards a very dear friend means to put him in the place of a neutral person, and should he experience the slightest pain, one feels disposed to weep. So this will also make one tired.

A neutral person is one whom one neither loves nor hates. To develop loving-kindness towards a neutral person means to put him in the place of a respected person or a dear person. So this will also make one tired.

When one thinks of one's enemy, anger arises, and so one cannot develop loving-kindness towards him.

Thus one should not develop loving-kindness first towards the above four types of persons.

Also one should not specifically develop loving-kindness towards persons of the opposite sex, for if one does, lust will arise in him. So a male yogī should not develop loving-kindness specifically to a woman, and vice versa.

However, after one attains *mettā-jhāna* and has broken the barriers between persons (*sīmāsambedha*), one can radiate loving-kindness to persons of the opposite sex in general such as *sabbā itthiyo* (all female persons) and *sabbe purisā* (all male persons).

One should never develop loving-kindness towards dead persons, for if one does so, one reaches neither absorption nor access. (*Visuddhi, Myanmar: i, 287-8*)

The Order of Persons to be permeated with Loving-kindness

One should first develop loving-kindness towards four persons in the order given below:

- 1 Atta – oneself,
- 2 Piya – a dear person including a respectable or adorable person.

- 3 Majjatta – a neutral person whom one neither loves nor hates,
- 4 Veri – enemy.

The initial development of loving-kindness towards oneself refers to making oneself an example. For even one develops loving-kindness for a hundred or a thousand years in this way ‘*aham sukrito homi*: may I be happy’, absorption will not arise.

But if one develops loving-kindness in this way ‘May I be happy. Just as I want to be happy and dread pain, as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings too’, making oneself the example, then a desire for other beings’ welfare and happiness arises in him. And this method is indicated by the *Buddha* himself by his words:

*“I visited all quarters with my mind
Nor found I any dearer than myself;
Self is likewise to every other dear;
Who loves himself will never harm another.”*

(S. i, 75; Ud. 47)

In accordance with these instructions, in order to make one’s mind tender and malleable, to make oneself an example and develop sympathy and consideration for others. one should first pervade oneself with loving-kindness for some time as follows.

- 1 *Aham avaro homi*
- 2 *Avyāpajho homi*
- 3 *Anīgho homi*
- 4 *Sukhī attānam pariharāmi.*

- 1 *May I be free from enmity.*
- 2 *May I be free from mental suffering.*

3 *May I be free from bodily pain.*

4 *May I be well and happy.*

After pervading oneself with loving-kindness, in order to proceed easily, one should develop loving-kindness towards one's teacher or a person like him, one's preceptor or a person like him, whom one adores and respects.

One should call to mind that person's generosity, affectionate words, etc., to inspire love and endearment, and also that person's morality, learning, etc., to inspire respect and reverence. Then one should develop loving-kindness towards that person in the following manner. With such a person, of course, one attains jhāna absorption.

Ayam sappuriso 1 Avero hotu

2 Avyāpajjho hotu

3 Anigho hotu

4 Sukhī attānam pariharātu.

May this good man be 1 free from enmity,

2 free from mental suffering,

3 from from bodily pain,

4 well and happy.

If the meditator has already attained the fourth jhāna by his practice of *Ānāpānassati*, or better by his meditation on white kasīṇa, then making this jhāna – concentration as the foundation of his meditation, he can quickly attain *mettā-jhāna* in developing loving-kindness.

In this case the meditator first develops the fourth

jhāna by practising Ānāpānassati or better by meditation on the counter image of the white kasiṇa. The concentration based on white kasiṇa is better, because it is accompanied with more brilliant light. When the meditation light becomes very brilliant and dazzling, he emerges from the fourth jhāna and focusses his mind on his teacher or a person of the same sex whom he loves and respects very much. The person will easily appear in the brilliant light.

Among the various postures of the person the yogī should choose the posture that he likes best. He should also visualize the happiest smiling appearance of the person that he has ever seen. He should visualize the person to be about six feet in front of him. Then focussing his attention on that person, he develops loving-kindness towards that person in the way mentioned earlier.

This development of loving-kindness will progress smoothly and quickly as it has the powerful support of the fourth-jhāna samādhi developed by either Ānāpānassati or white-kasiṇa meditation. That jhāna samādhi acts as powerful dependent condition. Because of that jhāna samādhi, the meditator's mind is calm and concentrated, free from all defilements, tender and malleable, and ready to undertake meditation.

After developing loving-kindness in four ways towards that respectable person, the meditator chooses one way which he likes best. Suppose he chooses the way 'May this good man be free from mental suffering'. Then, visualizing the happiest form of that person with

his face smiling, the yogī reflects repeatedly ‘May this good man be free from mental suffering’. This meditation on loving-kindness takes concept (*paññatti*) as its object; so the mind should be fixed on ‘*satta paññatti*’, the concept of living beings.

When the meditator’s mind is calm, quiet, tranquil, and well concentrated on the form of the respectable person who is smiling and free from mental suffering for one hour or more, he should reflect on the jhāna factors. If the jhāna factors – *vitakka*, *vicāra*, *pīti*, *sukha*, *ekaggatā* – appear clearly in his wisdom-eye, then it can be assumed that he has attained the first jhāna.

After practising to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the first jhāna, he eliminates *vitakka* and *vicāra* to attain the second jhāna. Then again after practising to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to the second jhāna, he eliminates *pīti* to attain the third jhāna. He cannot go higher to the fourth jhāna, because loving-kindness cannot associate together with equanimity (*upekkhā*) in the mind.

Then he develops loving-kindness by reflecting in the remaining three ways, one after another, going up to the third jhāna in each case. When he is reflecting ‘May this good man be free from enmity’, he should visualize the man to be free from enmity. Again when he is reflecting ‘May this good man be free from bodily pain’, he should visualize the person to be free from bodily pain. And when he is reflecting ‘May this good man be well and happy’, again he should visualize the

person to be well and happy. He should also develop loving-kindness to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to each of these jhānas.

According to the instructions given in *Visuddhi Magga* (i, 289) and *Mahāṭīkā* (i, 354), one should develop loving-kindness up to the third jhāna towards each person. As there are four ways for developing loving-kindness, one should attain the third jhāna in each way.

As the attitude wishing the respectable and adorable person to be free from enmity, to be free from mental suffering, to be free from bodily pain, and to be well and happy are not the qualities of equanimity, the fourth jhāna which is associated with equanimity cannot be attained.

When the meditator attains success in the manner described above, he should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards another respectable and adorable person. He should develop loving-kindness successfully towards at least ten such persons.

Then he should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards very dear persons including parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, one after another. The persons should be of the same sex as the yogī, and the third jhāna should be attained in each of the four ways of developing loving-kindness.

Then the yogī should develop loving-kindness in the same way towards at least ten neutral persons of the same sex one after another. He should visualize each one

clearly in his brilliant meditation light, and develop loving-kindness in four ways towards the person. He should reach the third jhāna in each way and acquire mastery in five ways with respect to all jhānas.

Then he should develop loving-kindness in the same way to his enemies or persons he hates. All the persons towards whom loving-kindness is being radiated must be of the same sex as one and must be living. If one does not have any enemy or hated person, then one does not develop loving-kindness towards enemies.

Before one develops mettā towards an enemy, one should develop it first on respectable and adorable persons, then towards dear persons, and then towards neutral persons until one attains the third jhāna in each case. When the mind is tender, malleable, and well-developed, and the meditation light is very intense and bright, then one visualizes the enemy in the meditation light and develops loving-kindness in four ways towards him: “May he be free from enmity, free from mental suffering, free from bodily pain, and may he be well and happy.”

After radiating mettā in this way a few times, one chooses the way one likes most, and develops loving-kindness towards the enemy in this way till one attains the third jhāna.

If one cannot attain jhāna due to the resentment towards the enemy, one must drive away the resentment by reflecting in many ways as described in Visuddhi

Magga. For example, one may reflect on the good qualities of the enemy while neglecting his bad qualities just as one removes the bones from the meat and eats only the meat.

If one cannot still make one's resentment or anger subside, one should reflect *Anamatakkā Samyutta* in which the Buddha described that in the long chain of one's uncountable existences in the round of rebirths (*samsāra*), there is no being who has not been related to one as father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister, etc.

If one's anger or resentment does not subside yet, then one should develop compassion towards him by reflecting that all worldlings are subjected to old age, sickness, death and woeful suffering. Or he may reflect on the great benefits of developing loving-kindness. When one's anger or hatred towards the enemy has subsided, one can develop loving-kindness towards that person up to the third jhāna.

One should cultivate loving-kindness in this way towards all one's enemies one after another. One should also practise to acquire mastery in five ways with respect to all these jhānas.

- **The Breaking of Barriers between Persons**
(*Sīmāsbhedā*)

When one can develop lovingkindness equally towards the four types of persons:

1 *Atta* – oneself,

- 2 *Piya* – dear person including adorable and respectable persons and very dear friends,
- 3 *Majjhatta* – neutral person whom one neither loves nor hates,
- 4 *Veri* – enemy or a person one hates,

and when one can eliminate the demarcations differentiating them as ‘This is I, this is a dear person, this is a neutral person, this is an enemy’, having no preference to any one to let him enjoy bliss or suffer pain, then one is said to have broken the barriers between persons or attained ‘*Sīmāsambheda*’.

We should develop lovingkindness to be boundless and limitless like this to make it fully bloom. To achieve this goal one must develop equal *jhāna-mettā* towards dear persons, towards neutral persons, and towards enemies after cultivating *mettā* in oneself for some time.

First one should develop the fourth *jhāna* of *Ānāpānassati* or better of white *kasiṇa* that one has already attained. When the meditation light becomes intense and bright, one should develop lovingkindness towards oneself for a few minutes. One cannot attain absorption by pervading oneself with *mettā*.

Then one should visualize a dear person to appear in the meditation light and develop lovingkindness in the way described above to attain the third *jhāna*. Next one visualizes an enemy to appear in the meditation light and develop lovingkindness to the third *jhāna* again.

Next one cultivates lovingkindness towards oneself for a few minutes, and then to another dear person, another neutral person, and another enemy, one after another up till the third jhāna. Next again one develops lovingkindness towards oneself, towards another dear person, another neutral person, and another enemy up till the third jhāna as before.

Thus changing the dear person, the neutral person, and the enemy each time, one develops lovingkindness towards *atta, piya, majjhatta, verī, atta, piya, majjhatta, verī*, and so on for many times. One cultivates lovingkindness up to the third jhāna every time one develops metta towards the dear person, the neutral person and the enemy, thus maintaining equal love towards all of them.

When one can maintain equal love towards oneself, the dear person, the neutral person, and the enemy, one attains *sīmāsambhedha*, that is one has broken the barriers between various persons. This means that one can truly love all persons as oneself.

This method of developing lovingkindness is successfully practised in International Buddha Sāsana Centres, Myanmar.

- **Developing 528 Modes of Mettā according to Paṭisambhidā Pāḷi**

According to *Visuddhimagga (i, 302)* the attainment of *sīmāsambhedha* is successful only in one whose mind has reached jhāna in developing lovingkindness. Again the development of 528 modes of mettā can be

fully successful only in one whose mind has reached absorption and who has attained *sīmāsambhedha* in developing lovingkindness.

In developing 528 modes of mettā:

- 1 The mind-deliverance of lovingkindness (*mettā cetovimutti*) is practised with unspecified pervasion in five ways;
- 2 The mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with specified pervasion in seven ways; and
- 3 The mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with directional pervasion in ten ways. (Ps. ii, 130)

(1) *Anodhiso Phāraṇā Mettā Cetovimutti*

The Mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with unspecified pervasion in 5 ways:

- 1 *Sabbe sattā* – all living beings,
- 2 *Sabbe paṇā* – all breathing beings,
- 3 *Sabbe bhūtā* – all creatures with distinct bodies,
- 4 *Sabbe puggalā* – all persons,
- 5 *Sabbe attabhāva pariyāpannā* – all those who have a personality.

These five kinds of unspecified beings are pervaded with lovingkindness in four ways each:

- 1 *Sabbe sattā* (i) *averā hontu*,
(ii) *avyāpajjhā hontu*,
(iii) *anighā hontu*,
(iv) *sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu*.

1 May all living beings be

- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna)
- (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna)

- (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna)
 - (iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna)
- Repeat with the remaining four types of persons.
- (1) Total modes of mettā = 5×4=20

(2) *Odhiso Phāranā Mettā Cetovimutti*

The mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with specified pervasion in 7 ways:

- 1 *Sabbā itthiyo* – all female beings
- 2 *Sabbe purisā* – all male beings
- 3 *Sabbe ariyā* – all noble persons
- 4 *Sabbe anariyā* – all not noble persons or worldlings
- 5 *Sabbe devā* – all deities or gods
- 6 *Sabbe manussā* – all human beings
- 7 *Sabbe vinipātikā* – all woeful beings in four lower abodes

These seven kinds of specified beings are pervaded with lovingkindness in four ways each:

- 1 *Sabbā itthiyo*
 - (i) *averā hontu,*
 - (ii) *avyāpajjhā hontu,*
 - (iii) *anighā hontu,*
 - (iv) *sukhī attānaṃ pariharantu.*

1 May all female beings be

- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
- (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),

(iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna).

Repeat with the remaining six kinds of beings.

(2) Total modes of mettā = $7 \times 4 = 28$

(1)+(2) Total modes of mettā = $20 + 28 = 48$

(3) *Disā Phāranā Mettā Cetovimutti*

The mind-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with directional pervasion in ten ways:

- 1 *Puratthimāya disāya* – the eastern direction,
- 2 *Pacchimāya disāya* – the western direction,
- 3 *Uttarāya disāya* – the northern direction,
- 4 *Dakkhināya disāya* – the southern direction,
- 5 *Puratthimāya anudisāya* – south-east direction,
- 6 *Pacchimāya anudisāya* – north-west direction,
- 7 *Uttarāya anudisāya* – north-east direction,
- 8 *Dakkhināya anudisāya* – south-east direction,
- 9 *Heṭṭhimāya disāya* – in the downward direction,
- 10 *Uparimāya disāya* – in the upward direction,

Sabbe sattā, sabbe paṇā, sabbe bhūtā, sabbe puggalā, sabbe attabhāva pariyāpannā, sabbā itthiyo, sabbe purisā, sabbe ariyā, sabbe anariyā, sabbe devā, sabbe manussā, sabbe vinipātikā averā hontu, avyāpajjhā hontu, anighā hontu, sukhī attanam pariharantu.

- 1 May all living beings in the eastern direction be
 - (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna),
 - (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna),
 - (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna),

(iv) well and happy. (cultivate up to third jhāna).
Repeat with the remaining eleven kinds of beings.

Total modes of mettā = 12 kinds of beings x 4 ways = 48

- 2 May all living beings in the western direction be
- (i) free from enmity (cultivate up to third jhāna)
 - (ii) free from mental suffering (cultivate up to third jhāna)
 - (iii) free from bodily pain (cultivate up to third jhāna)
 - (iv) well and happy (cultivate up to third jhāna)
- Repeat with the remaining eleven kinds of beings.

Total modes of mettā = 12 kinds of persons x 4 ways = 48

3 to 10 Repeat as above for the remaining eight directions.

(3) Total modes of mettā for ten directions = 48 x 10 = 480

(1)+(2) Total modes of mettā without specifying directions = 48

(1)+(2)+(3) Total modes of mettā = 528

So altogether there are 528 modes of mettā absorptions. If one lives with any one of these absorptions, pervading all beings with lovingkindness, then one is truly living in the divine abiding.

It is described in *Dīghanikāya* (*D. i, 250; Vbh. 272*) as follows:

*“ Mettāsaḥagatena cetasā ekam
disam pharittvā viharati, tathā
dutiyaṃ, tathā tatiyaṃ, tathā
catuttham, iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ
sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbavantam
lokaṃ mettāsaḥagatena cetasā
vipulena mahaggatena appamaṇena
averena avyāpajjhena pharittvā
viharati. ”*

*“ He dwells pervading one direction
with his heart endued with loving-
kindness, likewise the second direc-
tion, likewise the third direction,
likewise the fourth direction and so
above, below, and around; every-
where and equally without any
discrimination between various
types of beings he dwells pervading
the entire world with his heart
endued with lovingkindness, abun-
dant, exalted, measureless, free from
enmity, and free from affliction. ”*

This versatility of radiating lovingkindness at will comes about only in one whose consciousness has reached absorption in the first jhāna and the rest.

- **The Eleven Advantages of Lovingkindness**

The meditator who develops the mind-deliverance of lovingkindness through any one of these kinds of absorption obtains the following advantages.

- 1 He sleeps comfortably and happily.
- 2 He wakes comfortably and happily.
- 3 He dreams no evil dreams.
- 4 He is dear to and beloved by human beings.
- 5 He is dear to and beloved by non-human beings including deities.
- 6 Deities guard him as a mother and father guard their child.
- 7 Fire, poison and weapons do not affect him.
- 8 His mind is easily concentrated.
- 9 The expression of his face is serene.
- 10 He dies unconfused. He passes away undeluded as if falling asleep.
- 11 If he penetrates no higher than the attainment of lovingkindness to attain arahantship, then when he dies he will be reborn as a brahmā.

- **Recollection of the Enlightened One**
(*Buddhānussati*)

Buddhānussati is the first of the ten Recollections (*Anussatis*). It is the repeated recollections of the attributes of the Buddha.

Development of *Buddhānussati* comes to success in him who has absolute confidence (*aveccappasāda*), not in any other. The absolute confidence is one of the first three 'factors of stream entry' (*S.v. 196*). It is the unshakeable confidence accompanied with clarity of mind brought about by the correct understanding of the Noble Path. It is not moved and shaken by the wind of wrong belief. However, the confidence which is similar to the Noble Path confidence (*Ariya-*

magga saddhā) may also be taken as the absolute confidence.

Now a meditator with absolute confidence who wants to practise *Buddhānussati* should go into solitary retreat in a favourable abode and recollect the special attributes of the Enlightened One as follows:

- “Itipi so Bhagavā - Arahāṃ
 - Sammāsambuddho
 - Vijjācaraṇasampanno
 - Sugato
 - Lokavidū
 - Anuttaropurisadhamma-
 sarathi
 - Satthā devamanussanaṃ
 - Buddho
 - Bhagavā ”

He should recollect repeatedly with the correct understanding of the attributes as follows.

1 *So Bhagavā itipi Arahāṃ*

The Blessed One is known as *Arahāṃ* because he has destroyed all defilements and become noble, worthy of special veneration by all men, *devas* and *brahmās*.

2 *So bhagavā itipi Sammāsambuddho*

The Blessed One is known as *Sammāsambuddho* because he is fully enlightened understanding all that should be understood by himself.

3 *So Bhagavā itipi Vijjācaraṇasampanno*

The Blessed One is known as *Vijjācaraṇasampanno* because he is endowed with supreme wisdom and vir-

tuous conduct.

4 *So Bhagavā itipi Sugato*

The Blessed One is known as *Sugato* because of being gone to an excellent place (*Nibbāna*) and because he speaks only what is true and beneficial.

5 *So Bhagavā itipi Lokavidū*

The Blessed One is known as *Lokavidū* because he knows three worlds: the world of beings (*satta-loka*), the world of formations (*saṅkhāraloka*) and the world of location (*okāsa-loka*).

6 *So Bhagavā itipi Anuttaropurisdhammasārathi*

The Blessed One is known as *Anuttaro purisa dhammasarathi* because he is incomparable in taming those who deserve to be tamed.

7 *So Bhagavā itipi Satthā devamanussānam*

The Blessed One is known as *Satthā devamanussānam* because he is the guiding teacher of gods (*devas* and *brahmās*) and men.

8 *So Bhagavā itipi Buddhho*

The Blessed One is known as *Buddho* because he himself is enlightened and he can enlighten others to know the four Noble Truths and become noble persons (*Ariyās*).

9 *So Bhagavā itipi Bhagavā*

The Blessed One is known as *Bhagavā* because he is the most exalted and blessed One. He is blessed with special qualities such as six kinds of glory – *Issariya*, *Dhamma*, *Yasa*, *Sīri*, *kāma*, *Payatta*.

Issariya – the ability to control one’s mind skilfully as one wishes;

Dhamma – the ability to realize very skilfully the four Path-wisdoms (*Magga-ñāṇas*), the four Fruition-wisdoms (*Phala-ñāṇas*), and *Nibbāna*, known as the nine *Lokuttara-dhammas*;

Yasa – the ability to have one’s fame spread out truly in all directions throughout the human world, the *deva* world, and the *brahmā* world;

Sīri – the ability to have a well proportioned and fully developed body with comely, sublime, and adorable appearance, having thirty-two major distinctive features and eighty minor characteristic signs on the person of the Buddha;

Kāma – the ability to accomplish supernormal performances immediately as one wishes;

Payatta – the supreme effort which supports one to reach the summit.

When the meditator is recollecting the Buddha’s attributes as above repeatedly, his mind is not obsessed or distressed by greed, by hate or by delusion; but it is quite upright with the Buddha’s attributes as its object.

When his mind is not obsessed by greed, hate and delusion, he has suppressed all the hindrances, and his mind faces the meditation subject with rectitude. Then his initial application (*vitakka*) and sustained application (*vicāra*) occur with an inclination towards the Buddha’s special qualities. By reflecting on the *Buddha’s* attributes, he continues to exercise *vitakka*

and *vicāra*; and soon joy (*pīti*) arises in him.

With his mind joyful, with joy with proximate cause, his bodily and mental disturbances are tranquilized by tranquillity (*passaddhi*). When the disturbances have been tranquilized, bodily and mental bliss (*sukha*) arises in him. When he is blissful, his mind becomes concentrated with the Blessed One's attributes as its object. And so the jhāna factors eventually arises in a single moment.

However, as the attributes of the Buddha are profound, and the meditator is being occupied by recollecting the special qualities of many sorts, the jhāna is only access and does not reach absorption. In other words, the neighbourhood concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) is the highest concentration one can attain in practising *Buddhānussati*. And this access jhāna itself is also called '*Buddhānussati*', because it arises with the recollection of the Buddha's special qualities as the means.

- **A quick Way of Developing '*Buddhānussati*'**

For a meditator who has already attained the fourth jhāna by practising *Ānāpānassati* or white kasīṇa, he should first develop the fourth jhāna which is accompanied with very bright and penetrative light. With the help of this light he recalls or visualizes a Buddha statue which he adores and respects. When he sees the statue clearly in the light, he should pay homage to it, assuming it to be the real living Buddha. If he has seen a real Buddha in one of his past existences, that Buddha's image may appear in his vision.

He should then change his attention from the Buddha's image to the Buddha's attribute and reflect on it again and again. If the Buddha's image does not appear, he should regard the Buddha statue that appears in his meditation light as the real Buddha and reflect on the Buddha's attribute repeatedly.

He should reflect on all the nine attributes of the Buddha one after another, and then choose the one attribute which he likes best and reflect on it repeatedly – for example, '*araham, araham*'. When his concentration grows in strength, the Buddha's image will disappear while his mind remains focussed on the special attribute. If it is so, he should not try to recall or search for the Buddha's image; he should just focus his mind on the attribute.

With the strong support of the fourth jhāna concentration, he will soon attain the access jhāna in Buddhānussati. When his mind remains calmly focussed on the attribute for one hour or more without any distraction, he should view the jhāna factors. He will realize that he has reached the access jhāna as he can see the jhāna factors to be well developed.

He should then reflect on the remaining attributes of the Buddha one after another until he attains access jhāna in each case. He should also practise to acquire mastery with respect to this access jhāna.

- **The Benefits of *Buddhānussati***

A meditator who attains access jhāna in recollecting the attributes of the Buddha will gain the follow-

ing benefits.

- 1 He reverses his Teacher, the Buddha, with great respect.
- 2 He attains fullness of faith or confidence in the Buddha.
- 3 He attains good mindfulness.
- 4 He develops wisdom and understanding.
- 5 He gains a lot of merit.
- 6 He has much joy and happiness (bliss).
- 7 He overcomes fear and dread.
- 8 He is able to endure pain.
- 9 He comes to feel as if he were living in the Master's presence.
- 10 His body, permeated and inhibited by the Buddha's attributes, becomes as worthy of veneration as a chamber of relics.
- 11 His mind bends towards the sphere of the Buddha.
- 12 When he encounters an opportunity to commit an immoral action, he feels ashamed and frightened to commit it as though he were in front of the Teacher.
- 13 Even if he does not attain Path-consciousness and its Fruition in the present existence, he is at least headed for a happy destiny.

- **Meditation on Foulness**

(Asubha Bhāvanā)

The meditation on foulness is a very beneficial meditation subject. It is much praised by the Buddha for

it is the most effective meditation subject for subduing lust (*rāga*). Indeed the *rāga*-ogre is most afraid of this meditation subject for it is conquered by the perception of foulness (*asubha-saññā*).

The meditation on foulness was made a compulsory meditation subject for new bhikkhus at the time of the *Buddha*. A bhikkhu, who has successfully meditated on foulness, can easily subdue his lust by the perception of foulness and thus behave calmly and serenely like an Arahant.

Ten kinds of corpses suitable for meditation on foulness are described in *Visuddhimagga* (the Path of Purification).

- 1 *Uddhumātaka* – rotten, bloated corpse;
- 2 *Vinīlaka* – blue-black corpse with patchy discolouration;
- 3 *Vipubbaka* – festering corpse with pus oozing out;
- 4 *Vicchiddaka* – a corpse cut in the middle;
- 5 *Vikhāyitaka* – a gnawed corpse;
- 6 *Vikkhittaka* – scattered corpse, i.e. the limbs, the head, etc., are scattered here and there;
- 7 *Hatavikkhittaka* – the hacked and scattered corpse;
- 8 *Lohitaka* – blood-smeared corpse;
- 9 *Puḥvaka* – worm-infested corpse;
- 10 *Aṭṭhika* – a skeleton.

The meditator who wants to undertake *asubha bhāvanā* should first learn the meditation subject from a qualified teacher. The teacher should explain it all, that is, the directions for going to the corpse with the

aim of acquiring the sign of foulness, for characterizing the surrounding signs, for apprehending the sign of foulness in the corpse, in eleven ways, for reviewing the path of going and coming, and for attaining the jhāna in the meditation subject.

When the meditator has learnt it all well, he should go to a suitable abode or monastery and live there while seeking a suitable corpse. He should make the acquaintance of the man who looks after a cemetery and seek his help for finding the kind of corpse which he wants to use for the meditation on foulness. The corpse must be of the same sex as the meditator.

The meditator should go alone to the corpse at a quiet time without renouncing his basic meditation subject and keeping it always in mind. He should approach the corpse down wind and stand where the corpse appears clearly, and his mind is earnest, energetic and under control. He should stand not too far off or too near, or too much towards the feet or the head.

Then he should characterize the surrounding signs, that is, he notes carefully the features of the things around the corpse such as a stone or anthill or tree or bush.

Then he should apprehend the sign or corpse in the following six ways:

- 1 By its colour – note whether it is the body of one who is black, brown or white.

- 2 By its mark – note whether it is the body of one who is young, middle-aged or old.
- 3 By its shape – note the shape of its head, neck, hand, chest, belly, hips, thigh, calf, foot, one after another.
- 4 By its direction – note that from the navel downwards is the lower direction, and that from the navel upwards is the upper direction.
- 5 By its location – note the location of the head, the hand, the foot, the middle of the body.
- 6 By its delimitation – he can define thus: “This body is delimited below by the soles of the feet, above by the tips of the hair, all round by the skin; the space so delimited is filled with thirty-two pieces of corpse.”

If he could not develop the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) with such notations, he should apprehend the corpse again in five more ways:

- 7 By its joints – note three joints in the right arm, three in the left arm, three in the right leg, three in the left leg, one neck joint and one waist joint which make up fourteen major joints. All together there are one hundred and eighty joints.
- 8 By its openings – note the opening or the hollow between the arm and the side, the opening between the legs, the opening of the ear.

Also note the opened or closed state of the eyes as well as of the mouth.

- 9 By its concavities – note the concavities of the eye-sockets, of the mouth, of the neck, or of any concave place on the body.
- 10 By its convexities – note any raised place on the body such as the knees, the chest, the nose, the forehead, etc.
- 11 By its surrounding – the whole body of the corpse should be defined all round and with respect to its surrounding.

After noting the whole body in detail with meditation knowledge, he should focus his mind on the corpse and contemplate: “*asubha, asubha*” or “foulness, foulness”

He should apprehend the sign thoroughly in the corpse in the way already described. He should advert his mind to it with well-established mindfulness. He should see that it is properly remembered, properly defined, by doing that again and again. He should open his eyes, look and apprehend the sign a hundred times, a thousand times, contemplating: “*asubha, asubha*” or “foulness, foulness”.

He should also occasionally close his eyes and advert his mind to it. As he does so again and again, the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) becomes properly ap-

prehended by him. When is it properly apprehended? When he can see the corpse with his mind-eye (i.e., with closed eyes) as clearly as he sees it with open eyes, then the acquired sign is properly apprehended.

He should then try to develop the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) and the first jhāna on the spot. If he is unable to do so, he should return to his lodging, keeping that same meditation in mind, with mindfulness well established, and with his faculties being turned inwards.

Now just as a pauper who acquired a treasure of gems would guard and love it with great affection, feeling reverence for it as one who appreciates the value of it, so too the meditator should guard the sign, loving it and feeling reverence for it as one who appreciates the value of it.

In his night quarters or in his day quarters he should keep his mind anchored there thus: “*asubha, asubha*” or “foulness, foulness”. And he should advert his mind to the sign, bring it to mind and strike it with thought and applied thought over and over again.

As he does so, the counter sign arises. Here is the difference between the two signs. The acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) appears as an ugly, hideous, dreadful and frightening sight whereas the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*) appears like a prosperous man with plump limbs lying down after eating his fill.

Simultaneously with his acquiring the counter sign his lust is abandoned by suppression owing to his

giving no attention to sense objects. And owing to his abandoning of sense desires and keeping it far away, ill-will is abandoned too.

Likewise sloth-and-torpor is abandoned through exertion of energy; agitation-and-worry through devotion to peaceful things that cause no remorse; and uncertainty or doubt about the Teacher, about the way, about the fruit of the way, is abandoned through the actual experience of the blissful upacāra-jhāna which he has now attained. So the five hindrances are abandoned.

Also at that moment the applied thought or *vitakka* with the characteristic of directing the mind onto the counter sign, and the sustained thought or *vicāra* with the characteristic of pondering and joy (*pīti*), tranquillity (*passaddhi*), bliss (*sukha*), and the unification of citta and cetasikas on the counter sign, that is *ekaggatā*, all become distinct. So all the jhāna factors become manifest.

From the time the counter sign appears, he has reached the access jhāna. Now he anchors his mind on the counter sign and repeatedly reflects: “*asubha, asubha*” or “*foulness, foulness*”. His concentration will rise gradually, and sooner or later he will reach the first *rūpāvacara jhāna*. He should practise on to gain mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

Due to the repulsive nature of the meditation subject and the fact that the mind could not be anchored on the counter sign without the applied thought (*vitakka*),

only the first jhāna can be attained in asubha bhāvanā.

• **A Quick Way of Developing Asubha Saññā**

Again for a meditator, who has already attained the ānāpāna-fourth jhāna or the white-kasiṇa-fourth jhāna, he can easily and quickly develop the first jhāna in asubha bhāvanā. He first redevelops the fourth jhāna that he has attained.

When the meditation wisdom associated with the fourth-jhāna samādhi radiates very bright glittering light in all directions illuminating the surroundings, the meditator recalls the sign of the most repulsive corpse having the same sex as he does that he has seen formerly. He strives to observe that corpse under his bright wisdom light.

With the help of this bright, penetrative light, he tries to reobserve the corpse as he has seen it before. When he can see the corpse clearly under the bright wisdom light, he focusses his meditating mind calmly on the corpse in its most repulsive position, and reflects repeatedly: “*paṭikūla, paṭikula*” or “repulsive, repulsive”.

When his meditating mind remains calmly fixed on the sign of the corpse for one hour, two hours, or more, the sign of the corpse will change from the acquired sign (*uggaha nimitta*) to the counter sign (*paṭibhāga nimitta*). The sign of the corpse which the meditator sees vividly as if he is looking at the corpse with open eyes is the acquired image or sign.

(Visuddhi, i, 180)

*Uggahanimittam virūpam vibhaccham
Bheravadassanam hutvā upatthāti.
Paṭibhāganimittam pana yāvadattham
Bhuñjitvā nipanno thūlaṅgapaccaṅgapuriso
viyo. (Visuddhi. i, 183-4)*

Because the bhāvanā-manasikāra which is reflecting on the sign of the corpse is not yet well developed and exalted, and also because the sign of the corpse is not yet very calm, the acquired sign appears as a hideous, ugly, dreadful and frightening sight. When the counter sign arises, the bhāvanā-manasikāra is well developed and exalted, and the sign of the corpse becomes calm and steady. So the counter sign appears like a prosperous man with plump limbs lying down after eating his fill.

(Visuddhi.i, 183-4; Mahātī.i, 210)

Observing that counter sign the yogī reflects many times as “*paṭikūla, paṭikūla*” or “repulsive, repulsive” until his meditating mind remains established calmly on that sign for one hour, two hours or more. Then he reviews the jhāna factors to find them clearly evident. The meditator now attains the first jhāna. He should practise well to gain mastery in five ways with respect to this jhāna.

• The Benefits of Asubha Bhāvanā

A meditator who has reached jhāna in any one of the ten kinds of corpses attains the perception of foulness (*asubha saññā*) and can well suppress his greed

(*lobha*). So he is free from lust, passions, and frivolity, and he resembles an Arahant.

The young bhikkhu, *Vaṅgīsa*, was on his alms-round when he met an exceptionally beautiful woman who offered him food. Immediately strong lust was aroused in his heart, and he had to call for help from his teacher, Venerable Ānanda. The latter reminded him to recall the sign of foulness. As soon as he could recall the sign of foulness that he had developed formerly, his lust died down and he could move on freely.

Although this meditation subject appears to be foul and repulsive, still it arouses joy and happiness (*pīti* and *sukha*) in him by his seeing its advantages thus: “Surely in this way I shall be liberated from ageing and death.” It is just as a huge garbage heap does to a flower-scavenger who sees the advantages thus: “Now I shall get a high wage.”

This foulness, while of ten kinds, has only one characteristic, which is its impure, stinking, disgusting and repulsive nature. And foulness appears with this characteristic not only in a dead body but also in a living body.

The *Elder Mahā Tissa* who lived in *Cetṇyapabbatu* saw foulness in a woman’s body which appeared only as a skeleton to him, and the same phenomenon happened to the novice attendant on the *Elder Saṃgha-rakkhita* while he was watching the king riding an elephant. For a living body is just as foul as a dead

one, only the characteristic of foulness is not evident in a living body because it is hidden by temporary adornments.

So a capable person should apprehend the sign wherever the aspect of foulness is manifest, whether in a living body or in a dead one, and should make use of the meditation subject to reach absorption.

- **Mindfulness of Death**

- (*Maraṇānussati*)

One who wishes to develop mindfulness of death should learn this meditation subject from a qualified teacher, go into solitary retreat, and exercise attention wisely in this way:

“*Maraṇam bhavissati* — death will take place”; or

“*Jīvitindriyam upacchijjati* — the life-faculty will be cut off”; or simply

“*Maraṇam maraṇam* — death, death”.

If he exercises attention unwisely, sorrow arises in him in recalling the death of beloved ones, joy arises in recalling the death of enemies, no sense of urgency arises in recollecting the death of neutral persons, and fear arises in recollecting one’s death. All these sorrow, joy, fear, and so on, arise in one who lacks mindfulness, sense of urgency, and knowledge.

So he should look here and there at beings who have been killed or have died normally, and recall the

death of persons who were formerly seen enjoying good things. He should do thus mindfully with a sense of urgency and with knowledge. Then he can exercise his attention in the way beginning “Death will take place.” By doing so, he is exercising his attention wisely.

Some meditators, by just exercising their attention in this way, can suppress the hindrances, establish their mindfulness on death, and reach access in their mindfulness of death.

- **Eight Ways of Recollecting Death**

But if one does not reach access by merely exercising his attention as above, he should recollect death in eight ways.

- 1 As having the appearance of a murderer**

He should see death as a murderer who appears with a sword, applies it to his neck, ready to cut off his head. Why? Because death comes with birth and it takes away life.

- 2 As the ruin of success**

Here, in this world, prosperity shines so long as it is not overpowered by adversity, and success shines as long as failure does not overcome it. Furthermore, all health ends in sickness, all youthfulness in old age, all life in death.

Besides all worldly existence is procured by birth, haunted by ageing, oppressed by sickness, and struck down by death. This is how death should be recollected as the final ruining of life's success.

3 By comparing oneself to others

The meditator should be aware of death by comparing himself with others in seven ways, that is to say: with those of great fame, with those of great merit, with those of great strength, with those of great supernormal power, with those of great wisdom, with Pacceka Buddhas, with fully Enlightened Buddhas.

As all these people are subject to death and 'cannot escape death, they have all passed away. So why shouldn't I be subject to death, and sooner or later taken away by death?

When he does his recollection in this way by comparing himself with others of such great fame, etc.. in the light of the universality of death, thinking "Death will come to me as it even did to those distinguished beings", then his meditation subject reaches access.

4 As the sharing of the body with many

One has to share one's body with many. Firstly, this body is shared with eighty families of worms. Secondly, it is shared with several hundred internal diseases. Thirdly, it can be brought to death by external causes such as snakes, scorpions, accidents, etc. On account of these causes one may die or meet with danger at any

time. So death should be recollected as to sharing the body with many.

5 As to the frailty of life

This life is impotent and frail. For the life of beings is bound up with breathing, with the postures, with cold and heat, with the four primary elements, and with nutriment. If any of these conditions is upset, the life process is interrupted and life can be terminated.

6 By the absence of the sign

The span of life, the sickness which causes death, the time of death, the place where the body will be laid, and the destiny after death are unpredictable and can never be known by the living world as there are no signs which foretell them.

Though there are no signs to foretell them, death may come at any time at any place by any sickness or cause of death. This is how death should be recollected as signless.

7 By being limited in time

The extent of the human life is short. So short in fact is the extent of life that it is not certain even for as long as it takes to chew or swallow four or five mouthfuls. So one should develop mindfulness of death thus, 'Oh let me live for as long as it takes to chew and swallow a single mouthful that I may attend to the Blessed One's teaching, surely much could be done by me' or one should develop mindfulness of death thus, 'Oh let me live as

long as it takes to breathe out and breathe in that I may attend to the Blessed One's teaching, surely much could be done by me.'

This is how death should be recollected as being limited in time.

8 As to the shortness of the life-moment

In the ultimate sense the life-moment of living beings is extremely short, being only as long as a single consciousness moment. Just as a chariot wheel, when it is rolling, rolls or touches the ground only on one point of the circumference of its wheel, so too, the life of living beings lasts only for a consciousness moment. When that consciousness ceases, the being is said to cease.

- **Development of Access Jhāna**

When one thus recalls death in one of these eight ways, the mind owing to repeated attention gets the support of repetition, and mindfulness is established with death as object. Then the hindrances are discarded, and the jhāna-factors are manifested. But because the meditation subject is the dreadful nature of death and it awakes a sense of urgency, the jhāna does not reach absorption and is only access. This jhāna gets the name of death mindfulness (*māraṇānussati*) since it arises by the strength of death-mindfulness.

- **An Effective, Quick Method of Developing Death-mindfulness**

According to the instructions given in *Visuddhi Magga* (i, 222-3) and *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (Ma.i, 73) a meditator, who has successfully developed the first jhāna by reflecting on the foulness of a corpse (*asubha bhāvanā*), can easily change his meditation to mindfulness of death.

The meditator first recalls the acquired sign or the counter sign of a corpse which he has developed before. He then reflects on its foulness to develop the first jhāna in *asubha-bhāvanā*.

He then emerges from this first jhāna and reflects on the nature of his death thus, ‘This body of mine has the nature to disintegrate; I will surely die; I cannot escape from death.’

He should constantly focus his attention on the nature of his death, establishing mindfulness on death and developing a sense of urgency together with the knowledge of death. Soon he will observe with his mind-eye the disgusting corpse of his dead body in place of the external corpse. Then he discerns with his wisdom the nature of the cutting-off of life-faculty (*jivitindriya*) in his dead body.

And focussing his meditative mind on the object of the cutting-off of life-faculty, he reflects repeatedly in one of the following ways that he likes best:

- 1 *Maraṇam me dhuvam, jīvitam me adhuvam*
My death is certain, my being alive is uncertain.
- 2 *Maraṇam me bhavissati*
My death will certainly occur.
- 3 *Maraṇapariyosānam me jīvitam*
My being alive has only death as its end.
- 4 *Maraṇam maraṇam*
Death, death.

He should ardently strive to concentrate his meditative mind on the object of the cutting-off of life-faculty in his dead body for one hour, two hours or more. If he is successful, he will find that the jhāna factors become distinct.

As the object of meditation is the nature of death and frightening, awakening the sense of urgency, only *access jhāna (upacāra jhāna)* arises.

- **The Benefits of Developing Mindfulness of Death**

- 1 A meditator devoted to mindfulness of death is constantly diligent.
- 2 He acquires the perception of disgust and disenchantment with all kinds of existences.
- 3 He cuts off attachment to life.
- 4 He censures evil doing.
- 5 He avoids much storing. He has no stain of attachment to and avarice for requisites or properties.

- 6 The perception of impermanence (*anicca-saññā*) grows in him; consequently the perception of suffering (*dukkha-saññā*) and the perception of not-self (*anatta-saññā*) also appear in him.
- 7 While beings who have not developed mindfulness of death fall victims to fear, horror and confusion at the time of death as though suddenly seized by wild beasts, ogres, snakes, robbers or murderers, he dies undeluded and fearless without falling into any such state.
- 8 If he does not attain the deathless in the present existence, he is at least headed for a happy destiny on the breakup of his body.

- **When to Practise the Guardian Meditations**

The four subjects of guardian meditation are generally desirable meditation subjects (*sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhānas*). They should be practised whenever and wherever possible, especially at places where there is danger of being attacked by wicked persons, wild beasts, and ghosts. They should be practised before one undertakes one's special meditation subject (*Parihāriya kammaṭṭhāna*) and before one undertakes insight meditation (*vipassanā*).

Lovingkindness is the best weapon to defeat anger, hatred, and resentment. Bhuddhānussati is the best means to develop clarity of mind, and faith and confidence in the Blessed One.

Asubha bhāvanā is the most effective weapon to subdue lust, craving, and attachment. *Maraṇānussati* is very effective to develop the sense of urgency, and to restrain oneself from improper search for excessive wealth and sensual pleasure.

Therefore, when one gets angry or develops resentment against anyone, one should cultivate lovingkindness. When one lacks faith and confidence, one feels muddled up, one should practise *Buddhanussati*. When lust arises in one and agitates one, one should recollect the sign of foulness.

When one lacks the sense of urgency and feels idle to practise meditation, one should reflect on the nature of death.

When one is bombarded with various kinds of thoughts and feels restless, one should undertake mindfulness of breathing for *ānāpānassati* is most effective to suppress various thoughts and vitakka.

References:

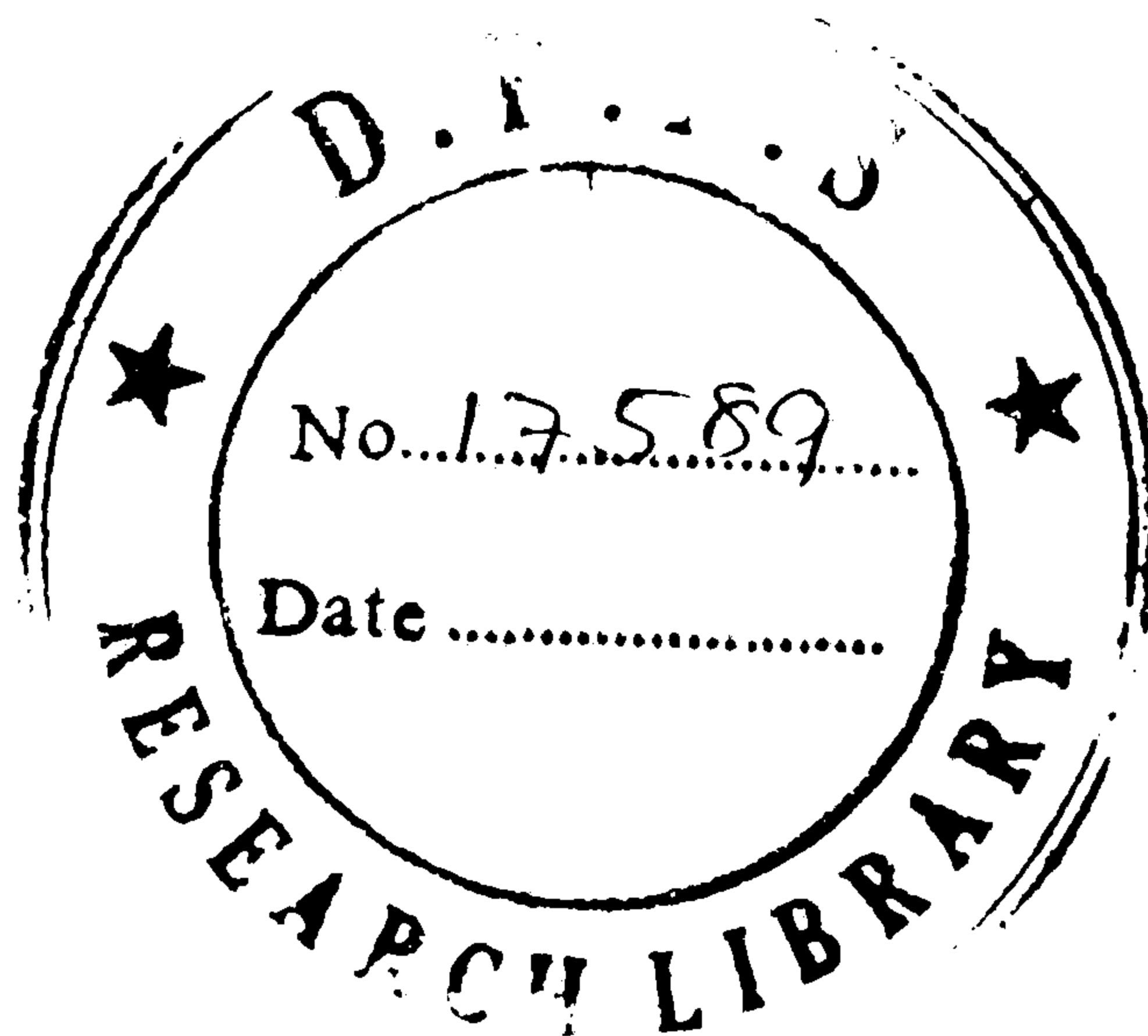
- 1 “*Visuddhi Magga*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated into Myanmar by Ven. *Nandamālā*, Vol.I, pp. 380-418, 339-377, 450-476.
- 2 “*The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli*, pp. 321-340, 206-230, 185-203, 247-259.

- 3 “*The Path of Purity (Visuddhi Magga)*” by *Bhaddantācariya Buddhaghosa*, translated by *Pe Maung Tin*, pp. 340-361, 226-245, 205-225, 264-275.

Review Questions

- 1 What are the four guardian meditations? Why and how should we practise them every day?
- 2 To whom loving-kindness should not be cultivated first? To whom and in what order should it be developed? How should it be developed?
- 3 How should we develop lovingkindness to attain metta jhāna?
- 4 How should we cultivate lovingkindness to attain *sīmāsambheda*?
- 5 How should we develop 528 modes of metta according to *Paṭisambhidā pāli*?
- 6 Why is *mettā-bhāvanā* regarded as a *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhāna*? What are its benefits?
- 7 How should we perform Buddhānussati to gain its full benefits?
- 8 How should we undertake Buddhānussati to reach access jhāna?
- 9 Describe a quick and effective way of practising *Buddhānussati* to reach *upacāra jhāna*?

- 10 Why is *Buddhānussati* regarded as a *sabbatthaka kammaṭṭhāna*? What are its benefits?
- 11 Why did the Buddha prescribe *asubha-bhāvanā* for new bhikkhus? How should one practise it to gain its full benefits?
- 12 Why is *asubha-bhāvanā* included in the four guardian meditations? Describe an effective method for developing asubha saññā quickly.
- 13 Should a meditator practise *asubha-bhāvanā* nowadays? Why? Describe the benefits of practising it?
- 14 What is '*maranānussati*'? How should it be undertaken to reach access known as '*maranānussati*'?
- 15 Describe the eight ways of recollecting death.
- 16 Why should we practise *maranānussati*? How should it be practised to get its full benefits?



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A. Aṅguttara Nikāya
AA. Aṅguttara Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
D. Dīgha Nikāya
DA. Dīgha Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
Dh. Dhammapada
DhA. Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā (Commentary)
Dhs. Dhammasaṅgaṇī
Iti. Itivuttaka
Jā. Jātaka
M. Majjhima Nikāya
MA. Majjhima Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Nd1. Mahā Niddesa
Nd2. Cūḷa Niddesa
Ps. Paṭisambhidāmagga
PsA. Paṭisambhidāmagga Aṭṭhakathā
S. Samyutta Nikāya
SA. Samyutta Nikāya Aṭṭhakathā
Sn. Sutta-nipāta
SnA. Sutta-nipāta Aṭṭhakathā
Ud. Udāna
Vbh. Vibhaṅga
VbhA. Vibhaṅga Aṭṭhakathā
Vin.i. Vinaya Piṭaka (3) - Mahāvagga
Vin.ii. Vinaya Piṭaka (4) - Cūḷavagga
Vin.iii. Vinaya Piṭaka (1) - Suttavibhaṅga 1
Vin.iv. Vinaya Piṭaka (2) - Suttavibhaṅga 2
Vin.v. Vinaya Piṭaka (5) - Parivāra
Vis. Visuddhimagga

